





*Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.*

231 Jottings from my Sabretasch. By a Chelsea Pensioner. London. 1847.

8vo. 292 pp. M., 7½ in. by 4¾ in.

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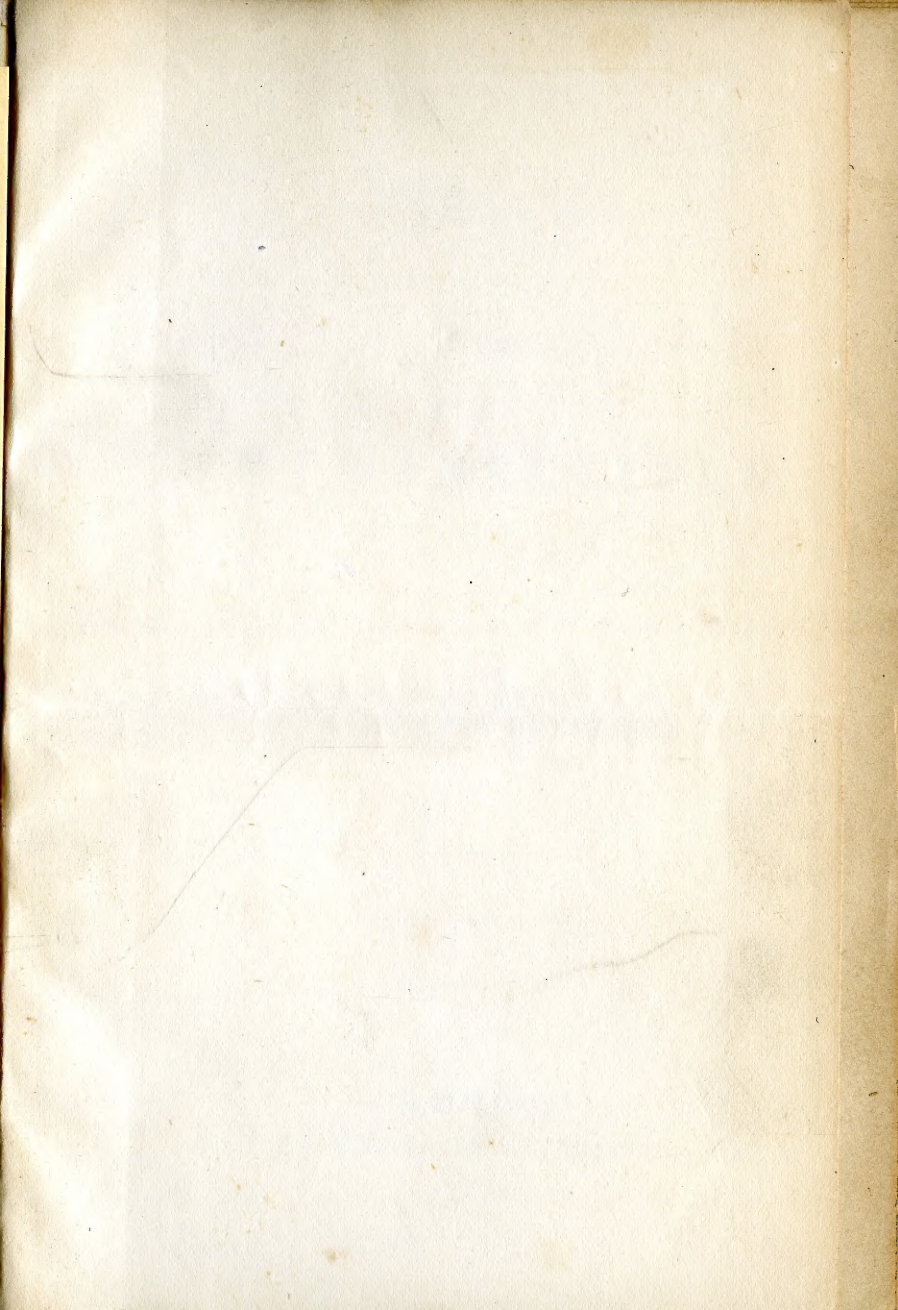
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231

# JOTTINGS

FROM

MY SABRETASCH.

BY

A CHELSEA PENSIONER.

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LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1847.

LONDON:

Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.



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# JOTTINGS

## FROM MY SABRETASCH.

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### CHAPTER I.

My position in the Tropics—Fallen fortunes—Discovery of my Peninsular memorandum book—My native county—Enter on the drama of life—Occupations in London—Rencontre with a Light Dragoon, and acceptance of the King's coin.

THE composition of the following memoranda had its origin in circumstances of which it may be proper, with the reader's permission, to give an account.

I had retired from the service nearly twenty years, and had taken up my abode in

a British Colony between the Tropics, where I held a respectable position and enjoyed every domestic comfort, having also a fair prospect of acquiring, if not a large fortune, at least means adequate to the wants of me and mine.

The lapse of time and ease of my situation had obliterated to a certain extent the feelings and impressions of the man military. The old soldier, now nearly a sexagenarian, was sinking into the vale of years amid the oblivious tranquillity of a steady civilian. All at once, by one of those convulsions incidental to mercantile pursuits, and which in the intertropical colonies of England have of late been more than ordinarily frequent, I was hurled from the sunny pinnacle of enjoyment and hope, and beheld the gulph of ruin yawning beneath me. To add to my distress, I was at the time separated from those whose presence would have cheered and relieved me. I had to mourn in solitude over my blasted prospects; and I verily believe that



poor human reason would have tottered upon her throne, had not mere accident afforded me relief in a quarter I should not otherwise have contemplated.

About the middle of the year 1844, during a rummage among the contents of an old chest, consisting principally of military books and papers, I discovered a little volume which had remained unnoticed for nearly a quarter of a century. It proved to be a memorandum book of French and Spanish manufacture, covered with parchment. This I at once recognised as my constant companion throughout the Peninsular campaigns, during which its place of deposit had been alternately the folds of the valise and the pocket of the sabretasch. I recollected having been accustomed, during the happy days of my connection with the gallant —th, to jot down in this book an abridgment of every notable occurrence and incident touching the regiment generally, and myself in particular. The sight of my old friend awakened a thousand

reminiscences. To link my jottings together into a connected chain was my first thought. What at the outset seemed difficult, became as I proceeded a labour of love; and my health, bodily and mental, was preserved by the diversion of my ideas and feelings from the channel into which they had unhappily begun to run.

The literary bantling thus brought into the world grew in favour with me as it increased in size. Still it was long before I could muster resolution, and screw my courage to the printing point. I trust there is no extraordinary stretch of presumption in the "Chelsea Pensioner's" requesting leave to cast his mite into the treasury of faithful remembrances of the wars waged against the power of Napoleon. My jottings, such as they are, embody an accurate transcript of my military experience without suppression or embellishment.

But perhaps I may be allowed to devote a page or two, as a sort of preliminary



recital to my career before I had recognized the face of Majesty on one of the royal coins.

I was born in a quiet and retired village in Shropshire. My father died when I was very young. Scarcely was I advanced half way in my teens, when the determination was come to, that on my presenting myself as an actor upon the stage of human life, the first scene of my exploits, whatever they might be, should be laid in the English metropolis.

I suppose the overland passage to India is now an affair less terrible to the youngest cadet than was to me the momentous transmigration from the tranquil cottages of *never-mind-where* to London. My poor mother accompanied me to the county town, where at five o'clock on a fine summer's morning, I was flung upwards on the diligence of that day, almost as uncereemoniously as a bundle of hay is pitchforked to the summit of a hay-rick. I need not say that this *diligence* was anything but a

diligent affair. As far as I remember, it resembled a modern London omnibus, and was dragged along by four long-tailed heavy black horses. Of course the parting between mother and son was, as is usual in such cases, both affectionate and affecting. With tears in her eyes, she implored divine protection and blessing on her boy,—her only child, her all, whom she was about to consign to the care of a female relative, who for some years had been married and settled in London.

Could either of us have then known that her boy was destined to “list for a common soldier,” I doubt if she would have suffered me to quit her side, or loose me from the hold of her apron strings; for in our unsophisticated little community, and at a time when as yet the land forces of the empire were, generally speaking, in any thing but brilliant repute, whoever “listed for a soldier” was at once set down among the catalogue of persons who had turned out ill. But heaven, which hides the book



of fate from a mother's eye, permitted her to anticipate no more than an ordinary result of my adventures.

The *diligence* was not a railway car, and consequently took about three days to accomplish our journey. Our whip, a thirsty soul, pulled up in every town and village, and by road side ; wherever, in short, a pretty bar-maid smiled, or a pot of malt foamed. In obedience to custom bound, I was sworn at Highgate, on the great pair of sheep's horns, kissing which, stuck on the top of a pole, I vowed during my progress through life, never to eat brown bread when I could procure white, unless I liked the brown as the better of the two ; never to kiss the maid when the mistress could be come at, unless the maid was the handsomer ; and never to do twenty other things, unless they specially fell in with my interest and inclination.

Suffice it to say that, settled in London, I adopted the profession of the quill, and was at first installed on a stool as tall as

myself in the counting-house of a merchant in the City. But in consequence of a fit of illness, I turned to the occupation of my uncle-in-law, a chronometer maker of some eminence. This person having been seduced by the compliments of an East India captain who had found one of his instruments to be remarkably accurate during a voyage to Calcutta and back, had turned to company, gambling and drinking, until the irregularity and discomfort of my home, and the misery to which I saw my aunt subjected, imperceptibly prepared my mind for the most determined courses. The remark has often been made—that human beings are to a certain extent the creatures of circumstances. Had I received judicious, paternal, and considerate treatment in the ingenious establishment in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, the world—awful event!—would never have perused these “Jottings from my Sabretasch.”

It was in the month of January, 1806, that happening to be on a stroll through



Westminster, I forget with what object in view, I was attracted by a huge placard on which was emblazoned the figure of a light dragoon, mounted on a dashing steed and brandishing a sabre. Around this formidable pair ran the legend: "Elliott's Light Horse, commanded by H. R. H. the Duke of Cumberland." My broad stare at the contents of the monster sheet had not been concluded, when I felt a sort of bum-bailiff's tap on the shoulder, and looking round I was accosted, with a wink meant to be particularly knowing, by a swaggering blade of a light horseman *in full fig* of the very costume which I had been admiring. With this heroic representative of the God of war, there was no beating about the bush at all, no preparatory flourish.

Dashing at once into the middle of his subject, he excited my young and vacant fancy by a glowing account of the glories, the delights, the privileges, and what not, of a soldier's life. No sooner had he learned

from me that I could write, and was, indeed, thanks to the care of my poor old mother, a bit of a scholar, than,—mercy on us!—he would have it that between me and certain advancement in the service there was but one stepping-stone.

What a noble piece of work is man! In dignity, in intellect—I forget the exact quotation—how like a God! Still man, masterpiece as he is, is frequently only the creature of the impulse of the moment. Previously to this casual rencontre with this modern “Kyte” of Elliott’s Light Horse, I should have considered the career of a soldier not more probable than the attainment of the Archbishopric of Canterbury. But if ever a manufacturer of recruits was qualified for the trade which he had undertaken, it was the swagging individual rejoicing in the euphonious name of “Bill Buckley.” Under his fascination, I forgot or foreswore my allegiance to levers, mainsprings, escapements, balance-wheels, and all the other machinery

of the concern in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, and accepted, as an earnest of my new obedience, the shilling of his Majesty King George the Third; for the speedy transference of which shilling from my pocket to that of another, thou, Oh Whitbread!—great in politics, and in malt (as I found to my cost) overwhelming—dost still stand on the tablets of my memory as responsible.



## CHAPTER II.

Difficulties and disagreeables attending enlistment—  
I join the regiment—Imprisonment and release—  
Touches upon barrack life—Upon drunkenness and  
military training.

AMONG the various preliminaries through which I had to run the gauntlet, one of an almost insurmountable nature presented itself—my shortness of stature, for I was not within the prescribed standard of height warranted by his Majesty's regulations. This seemed a sad stumbling-block to my military aspirations; but an antidote to the disease was soon discovered, and it was settled, *sub rosa*, that in order to remove the objection, I should report myself a *leetle*

younger than I really was, and thereby personate fully, and to all intents, the growing lad.

At length came the eventful hour that was to usher me into the presence of Royalty, for so much interest did his Royal Highness take in this regiment, that every recruit enlisted in London had to undergo the test of his personal approval. After waiting some time in the lobby at St. James's Palace, his Royal Highness approached from an inner apartment, and his noble and commanding frame, dressed in blue, and diagonally crossed by a broad ribbon, (red I think), stamped an impression that still exists. Shoes off and under the standard was the first move, and—mercy on us!—what awful and conflicting sensations of hopes and fears I was subjected to. An unsophisticated chubby-faced lad, lately from the wilds of Shropshire, standing shoeless in the presence of so august a personage as a Prince of the blood royal, awaiting with trembling anxiety the royal

fiat of, "to be or not to be." After a minute and searching optical examination by his Royal Highness, the following dread words fell upon my ear, "Good-looking lad, E—tt," addressing the recruiting officer, "very good looking ; but short—too short." Here vanished at one flight those visions of military glory in which I had so indulged myself, and with which I had been so well dosed by the recruiting party. So paralysing was the effect, that verily I believe my real altitude at the moment must have been subjected to an apparent diminution. The good and excellent old Lieutenant stepped in at once to my relief and rescue, and overruled the objections of his Royal Highness, by setting forth my youth, healthy appearance, and certainty of growth. How I inwardly blessed him at the time! and although I may have sowed much more than I have reaped from the circumstance, I do not even now look back with regret.

The Lieutenant in question—long gathered to his fathers—was one out of a number



who had obtained rank through the interest of his Royal Highness, and I fearlessly hazard the assertion that no Colonel of a regiment took a more lively solicitude in elevating the position of meritorious and deserving non-commissioned officers than the Royal Duke. It only required that the deserving should be brought to his notice to ensure advancement; but they must be really deserving,—and why not?

In a military work I have read, I believe by our great Peninsular historian, something is said disparaging to the hopes of the British soldier from having to fight “under the cold shade of the aristocracy.” Now without presuming to shiver a lance or bandy words with the gallant historian as to the advantage or disadvantage of FIGHTING under the shade of the aristocracy, I do in all sincerity of heart and soul affirm, that had I my military career to go over again, I would most assuredly *enlist under its “shade,”* and hazard the risk of its temperature. *They* have seldom

been found chary in using their influence for the benefit of those who have entered the service through the portals of the ranks. In illustration of this assertion, I need not travel farther for proofs than the particular description of force to which I belonged—the hussars—the four regiments being then commanded by the Prince Regent, the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Paget, and Sir Charles Stewart.

I was once told of an old and meritorious non-commissioned officer with shattered constitution, and energies wasted in the service of his country, burthened furthermore with a small and numerous family, who intreated a noble personage for employment through an officer who was supposed at all times to have a ready and favourable access; the reply was, “Oh no! I cannot do any thing of the sort, I am likely to have a family of my own and shall require favours for *them*.” Now I do not think an aristocrat would have so replied; indeed, as regards myself,

I have the vanity to believe, that could I have taxed my patience for a few more years' service, I might still have been in harness.

Amongst other and necessary preliminaries which the recruit has to undergo, one only appeared to me to be disgusting, and that was the surgical examination. The necessity of such a measure no one can dispute; but there are different ways of carrying through the examination. The medical officer at that time in London had gained an unenviable sort of notoriety amongst the Johnnies for *his* method. As regards myself, I must say that the examination I underwent at the regiment by the kind and good Dr. L—e was far different, and I should imagine, looking to his reputation and zeal, equally beneficial and efficient as regards the interests of the service. I well remember to what an extent my delicacy was shocked on being ordered to peel, and submit my naked figure to the gaze of several bystanders;



but when it came to capering about the apartment, genuflexion, posturing, &c., I was thoroughly disgusted.

All due forms being accomplished and gone through before final approval at the regiment, my wits were set at work how to get away speedily from town, for I was well assured that a rigid search after, and probable capture of the runaway would be the consequence of my remaining there; moreover, I felt nowise ambitious or inclined to figure away as a decoy-duck amongst the other Johnnies in the Park. My wishes were yielded to, provided I bore the expense of coach hire, to which I readily assented. In the scheme I was joined by two or three others. I contributed also to frank our escort's ride; and at about five A.M. on a bitter cold and dark morning, I was perched upon the top of a coach opposite the Bear Inn, Piccadilly, and whisked off to the headquarters of the regiment at Radipole barracks. Here many days had not passed

over my head before the contrast between rubbing the sweated carcase, and wet and dirty legs of a horse bone-dry, superadded to the misery of short commons (no joke to a growing lad) and the comforts of a warm carpeted parlour in Great Russell Street, as also an utter absence of any attention to the cravings of an empty stomach were made unmistakeably manifest. But although an opportunity was at hand, as will soon appear, of ridding myself of all these drawbacks upon the comforts of life, I held on and stuck to my colours.

It is a well-known fact amongst military men, that a much less quantity of food satisfies the old than the young soldier, to favour which an apparent advantage is gained by the former in husbanding his ration. Johnny generally makes a clean platter of the "who shall" at the first onslaught, whereas the old file treasures up a reserve for a second or third attack.

The "who shall" is the name given to the ration after subdivision into individual portions, and ready for being "bobbed out," which is thus performed. One of the mess turns his back upon the *spread*, the carver then taps with his knife each plate consecutively, exclaiming as he does so "who shall have this?" which is responded to by the man whose back is turned; and if in putting the question the verb "shall" be strongly emphasized, all doubt is removed as to the intended recipient, and the well-understood "Johnny" is named; for with every disposition on the part of the carver to make an equitable division into ten or a dozen dishes, some will of necessity be less attractive in appearance than others, either on the score of possessing a superabundance of "timber," or a less tit-bitish aspect, and one of these is destined for the "raw." This *ruse* soon however ceases to be practised with impunity, for the keenness of Johnny's appetite



soon causes him to become wide awake to the deceit, and also a fierce asserter of his rights.

Musters, in those days, were taken on every 24th of the month, and one took place not many days after my joining. On the group arriving opposite me, the initial of whose name was not very deep in the alphabet, a sudden pull-up was made; and, on the paymaster's calling out my name, a fierce-looking, red-whiskered, and moustachioed officer, of rather small stature, shook his fist menacingly at me, exclaiming, "Oh, you precious young rascal! You are an apprentice, and will be transported for perjury. Sergeant-major! put him in irons and the black hole!" Here was a damper, at once destructive to the hopes of a military aspirant! Pilgarlick had to descend from his steed, and was accordingly popped into solitary durance, but *sans* the manacles. Here ample time was afforded him for ruminating upon things past,

present, and to come, with brown Tommy and water for sustenance during the day, and a bevy of rats racing in the cell, for companions throughout the night.

After three or four days' durance in the black hole, I was taken before the adjutant, and soundly rated for the enormity of my offence—perjury. My answer was, that I did not consider myself a regular bound apprentice, and was determined not to return. Here I touched a pleasing chord ; and the gallant officer brightened up at once with smiles, and a promise of seconding my intentions to remain in the regiment. Off I was next trotted to the commanding officer's apartments (Lieut.-Col. L—g), who, upon being made acquainted with my resolve, not only lauded it, but lent himself to its furtherance ; and, in a kind and persuasive manner contrasted, in strong and glowing colours, the glories of a soldier's life, with the more ignoble pursuit of fiddling away at, and filing watch-wheels.

Indeed, I make no doubt that my future destiny was mainly determined by this highly-accomplished gentleman and thorough-bred soldier.

The rigours of imprisonment were now so far softened down, that pending the issue of a lengthened correspondence, entered into between the regiment and the higher powers, the remaining portion of my durance (several weeks) was limited to the guard-room, day and night. Not only did Lieut.-Col. L—g have me into his room to copy the voluminous instructions he was penning for the regiment, but I became a sort of guard-room pet, and the horrors of incarceration existed only in name. Even moderately educated men were in those days rather at a premium in the service; and I was frequently employed in making out the guard reports of such non-commissioned officers as were not *au fait* at the quill, and had to chronicle myself as a guard-room prisoner. Several rounds of duty had devolved upon all during my



occupancy of the guard-room ; and the first salute I generally received from the sergeant, on taking over his charge, was " Ah, my little fellow ! you here still ? Better have stuck to watch-making ! " From the whiskered old trooper and gruff veteran—" Go home to your master, you young — ! " (a naughty word) " or you will have to sup sorrow by spoonsful."

My uncle was unceasing in resorting to every conceivable measure to cure me of my military mania, and to get me back. The nature of the correspondence consequent thereupon must still be extant in the *archives* of the regiment of that period ; and I really fancy—such a fuss being made about me by the contending parties—that I must have been thought of some consequence. My uncle at last thought he had achieved a victory ; and down he came with a mandate from headquarters, ordering me to be delivered up. But if he came to gather wool, he went

back shorn, and it turned out no go; for the

“Boy, he would for a soldier go,  
Whether his — would let him, or no;”

and I flatly refused to return. He found a powerful auxiliary in his efforts to get me off in Sir Francis Vincent, who at that time was a lodger, and held some influential official appointment under the Fox Administration.

The question of “to be, or not to be,” being now finally settled, I set in good earnest about learning my duties, and went through my probation with perhaps less annoyance and personal discomforts than many other recruits. Education, as I have before observed, was not at all general; and, in addition to acting as clerk for the quartermaster at every two months’ settlement of the men’s accounts, I willingly assented to taking orders at the orderly-room for such of the non-commissioned officers as were slow in their penmanship. It was not an

unusual circumstance, in those days to see half, or nearly so, of the orderly sergeants take an amanuensis with him. The performance of these little offices secured me from many vexatious employments inseparable from the duties of the private, such as fatiguing-parties, double horses, &c. I believe I might have become an embryo candidate for one of those situations occupied by the smaller fry of the staff; but I eschewed the quill for any other purpose than merely to keep my hand in, and stuck to the sword; and, as the regiment remained more than twelve months in Radipole barracks, I became, before its removal, a full-blown hussar and mounted guard.

Coincident with my joining the regiment was the appointment of a new commanding officer, for the purpose, as reported, of reforming both the morals and discipline of the corps; and in this undertaking, no one could labour more, both physically and mentally, than the talented Colonel L—g. To an untiring zeal, activity, and persever-

ance, he added a thorough knowledge for perfecting the hussar in every branch of his duty, from his entrance into the barrack-room, to his completion and fitness for the field. Nothing came amiss to this highly-gifted officer; and he possessed the ability and tact of rendering obedience to his instructions as much a pleasure as a duty. It is my belief he never penned a regimental order merely for form's sake.

The *on dit* of the day was, that to carry out *his* intentions, he would have to turn the regiment inside out; and had such an extraordinary procedure been found requisite, he was equal to the task. He had much to contend with, much to encounter, particularly in effecting reformation of the bad and indifferent; and whether or not the end justified the means, I leave it to wiser heads than mine to pronounce opinion upon: but on emerging from Radipole barracks a more highly-disciplined corps than the —th hussars existed not in His Majesty's service, whether as regards



intelligence in those having authority, interior economy, or field movements.

The flogging system was then much in vogue as a military punishment, and was unhappily of frequent necessity ; more I am persuaded from being in accordance with the usage of the day, than from a *penchant* on the part of Colonel L—g for the odious infliction. On the occurrence of these painful exhibitions, sure I am that the better and finer feelings of the man were sacrificed upon the altar of zeal for the service. Never did I hear—nor I believe any one else—the “ Strip, Sir ! ” escape his lips, for he invariably quitted the riding-school before that process commenced ; but before quitting the arena of punishment such a lecture did he read the culprit, as made it appear, not only to himself, but the lookers-on, that he got no more than his deserts. With eloquence, feeling, and force, which went home to all, did he dwell upon the nature of the offence committed ; and as drunkenness was the most frequent, he dwelt with

telling effect upon the evil consequences of that demoralizing propensity; holding up to view the distinguished character the regiment had gained, not only for general good conduct as citizens, but for their bravery and chivalrous deeds on the battle-field, which the culprit had disgraced; that nothing was more calculated to tarnish their well-won and enviable distinction than the vice of drunkenness, which he was determined to put down: and well did he accomplish his ends.

That many bad characters had crept into the regiment, is a fact not more deplorable than true, and which may be traced to different causes. In the first place, "grim-visaged war" was raging in all its horrors; and in filling up the corps to a war establishment, quantity rather than quality was sought for and easily obtained, in consequence of the high bounty and reward. Secondly, it had been the custom for officers, in order to gain a step in promotion, to furnish a certain quota of men;

and to attain *this* object, the end rather than the means may have been looked to; and for aught I know the gallant —th may have had strong infusions, not only from the off-scourings of society, but liberated gaol-birds.

So much has been said and written in deprecation of drunkenness, that any thing I may advance may be scarcely worth noticing. Nevertheless, I must indulge in a few observations upon the subject; and when I hear of a corps wherein this evil propensity exists to an extent injurious to the service, I can come to no other conclusion, than that there has been something radically defective in the moral training. Why should youths who had probably but seldom or ever crossed the threshold of a public-house, become all at once tipplers after entering the service? Such melancholy results would lead to the supposition, that they had become inmates of a school for demoralization, rather than one for military discipline. Looking to the truism, that

evil is a much stronger principle than good, I consider it of vital consequence that the recruit should, in the first instance, be permitted to *chum* with no other than a soldier of sober habits. Indeed, as regards myself, I will not pretend to say that had I been doomed to *chum* with one of opposite principles, *I* might not have become a tippler, and something worse.

Excellent, good, kind-hearted Lershton, never shall I forget thy almost parental regard! Never did he entice me to the canteen or public-house; but in hours when we were off duty, whether in the barrack-room, wandering in the fields, or strolling by the sea-side, he amused me with stories and recollections of his beloved fatherland (Germany). Sure I am, that if his military career had not been cut off by sickness and death in Portugal, his bravery in the field would have been as conspicuous as his good conduct on all other occasions.

It seems to me that, as regards cavalry, a cure to the evil may be found in creating



a post for one that, in addition to all his other duties, should be held strictly responsible for the moral training of his troop.

I know of none so fitting for that duty as the quartermaster of old, who held that intermediate position between the commissioned officers and the non-commissioned officers and men, which prevented his being rubbed into a familiarity with the aristocratical feelings of the former, and was sufficiently removed from the latter to command both obedience and respect from all under him.

I have heard of various reasons which have been assigned for doing away with the troop quartermaster. The real cause I know not: possibly it was hatched by some penny-wise and pound-foolish radical economist; but if, as has been said, some of them had degenerated into useless, lazy, and corpulent fellows, it may be reasonably asked with whom the fault lay. The situation was always considered respectable and to be envied by the military aspirant;

and let the provisions of the appointment be as stringent as they may for the benefit of the service, sure I am, men of intelligence may be found who would gladly fill the post, and implicitly perform the conditions of the bargain.

A vicious system existed in the regiment to which I belonged, although I believe it was viewed in an opposite light. Whenever a troop was chosen for out-quarters, the bad or indifferent were selected to remain at head-quarters as a matter of course. Regarding the measure purely on the score of punishment to the individuals, and apart from all other features, such a method may have answered ; but if the more paramount consideration, reform, was to be looked to, the failure was complete, and the result generally was the confirmation of bad habits. Moreover, as each detachment constituted the rallying-point or nucleus for all the recruits of their respective troops, what could be expected from such a vitiated atmosphere? A pretty example,

truly, for the unsophisticated at the outset of their career !

To use legal phraseology, I shall adduce “a case in point ;” and although it may to some smack of egotism and arrogance, I will not, after twenty years’ experience as a non-commissioned officer, (fifteen of which on the boundary step), pay so bad a compliment to my understanding as not to consider myself capable of giving an opinion on the matter in question—ay, and of being able to maintain it by sound argument.

Previous to the removal of the regiment to Ireland, somewhere about 1822 or 1823, a sweeping condemnation of horses was made by the Inspector-general, to the extent I believe in some instances of a third of the troop ; and as the remounts were to be procured in the Sister-kingdom, so numerous were the detachments necessary to their training, as to leave room only for one troop at head-quarters, and that chanced to be the one to which I belonged. The varied and onerous duties which fell to my share with such an heterogeneous

assemblage, were of themselves sufficient (I never employed an amanuensis) without being pestered and annoyed by reports of petty misdeeds, mainly arising from the causes to which I have just adverted. I laid my grievance before the commanding officer, and suggested a remedy for the existing disease, which was neither more nor less than to send (as opportunities offered) all indifferent characters to the most proper and legitimate guardians of their conduct—their *own troop*; and I further pointed out the consequences that must necessarily result to the young soldier. A salutary weeding soon took place in consequence of my suggestions.

Men seldom become so enamoured of crime as to pursue it reckless of consequences, if grappled with on every occasion. I have had many loose fish to deal with in my time, and seldom missed (egotism with a vengeance, the reader will be inclined to say!) effecting a considerable improvement in the patient, if not a perfect cure; the



first to notice and control his misdeeds,—the first also to meet him on other and more pleasing grounds,—to scatter to the winds all past and painful recollections,—to cheer and hark him on in his new path !

I have known some who have plumed themselves upon their mighty zeal and cleverness in detecting crime, and dragging it to light and punishment. This, as Mrs. Caudle would say, “is all very fine,” and very well as far as it went ; but it did not go far enough. Taking into consideration that chances had been allowed to pass by, whereby that overflowing zeal might have been expended in “nipping the evil in the bud,” it is, to say the most, little more than clapping a plaster upon a wound that never ought to have gangrened.

The untiring energy of Colonel L—g was no less effective in accomplishing other reforms inseparable from the formation of the fully-instructed hussar,—whether as regards the barrack-room, the stable, the *ménage*, the drill, and the ultimatum—the

field, on all which points his instructions were inimitable, (and as I have before remarked penned, not for form sake, but positively entered upon and carried out,) as well as in effecting improvement in the morals of the regiment.

To use a figure of speech—so admirably was every link in the chain of responsibility forged for its functions, that the whole machinery worked with the precision of mechanism, and every shoulder had to bear its assigned burthen. A high moral tone was inculcated ; bullying and swearing were put down ; and, in conducting the drills, noise and force of lungs gave place to a method of instruction calculated to draw out the capabilities of the recruit, without souring his temper.

The marching order was at first vexing and unpalatable from the tediousness and length of the examination ; but who will be hardy enough to assert that perfection in this particular may not be considered as one of, if not the most important feature in,

cavalry training? Look at the multiplicity of trappings and strappings with which the animal is burthened. How necessary, therefore, that every strap be so nicely adjusted as to remove all chances of injury or torture in making a long march. Inattention to this essential, and a consequent punishment to the horse, should properly come within the meaning of that category of crime denominated "cruelty to animals," and should be punished accordingly.

The creditable and efficient manner in which the regiment made the Peninsular campaign, was not slightly attributable to the excellent instructions of Colonel L—g. Of one thing I have had personal knowledge as well as ocular proof; namely, that in the regimental returns rendered to the Brigade-Major, fewer casualties from sore backs were exhibited than from any of the other regiments; indeed I would fearlessly extend the challenge to all the other brigades. Marches made at home go little towards training the soldier for an effective

and harassing one in a campaign, and something seems wanting to attain that desideratum; say a closer identity of the man with the animal—a more thorough knowledge inculcated of the true relative position of the one to the other; that his services as a soldier may be either useful or valueless in proportion to the care he bestows upon it: *adducere hinc locum* I

To adduce an imaginary illustration, in addition to the ordinary burthen at home, clap a further weight of some three quarters of a hundred pounds in the shape of provender, provisions, ammunition, horse-shoes, and nails, &c., and the good or inefficient training of the cavalry soldier will soon be tested. I have omitted to mention other slight drawbacks from the comforts at home—the absence of an amply supplied rack and manger; and last, though not least, a well-bedded stall to repose in. It is well known how soon a cavalry regiment may tumble to pieces in point of efficiency, and become not only a clog and



incumbrance to an army in the field, but a sore nuisance and grievance to the chief; to say nothing of the monstrous expense entailed upon the country without getting any adequate value in action. To avert such consequences as these were the end and aim of Colonel L—g.

Although it may be thought rather out of place, I cannot avoid adverting to a circumstance which has long annoyed me, and under which I at first winced, being goaded to a feeling of madness. It cannot have been forgotten that certain scribblers, in commenting upon the events of the great Waterloo fight, showed up the “lights” in unenviable distinction with the “heavies.” This, to say the least, was not only ungenerous but unmanly. Could not these detractors from our well won and fair fame have contented themselves with revelling in and extolling—to the skies if they chose—the chivalrous deeds of their pets, without disparagement to us? I would just ask those wiseacres who wrote and chattered

on a subject of which they were as ignorant as a bāt-horse would be, what sort of pioneering the Allied Army would have had from the banks of the Tagus to those of the Garonne, had that harassing duty, in conjunction with the brave and gallant infantry, devolved upon heavy men and heavy horses—introducing incidentally, and by way of diversifying the scene, several weeks' out-post duty in the Pyrenees, during a cold and deluging winter; villainous roads (rather say tracks); short commons for the men; and the animals mainly dependant upon the exertions of the riders in gathering the only herbage within reach, tops and sprouts of the young gorse upon the hill top. Now, I repeat, let this description of force, the "heavies," be as lion-hearted as you please—ay, paragons of perfection in all and every of the cavalry soldier's knowledge of duty—what sort of pioneers would they have made upon such an occasion? If the weak intellects of our detractors require to be enlightened upon

these points, there are many more able than myself to the task.

After the gallant Colonel had grounded and moulded the corps to his wishes, preparatory to giving the finishing touch, we were treated with field-days and sham-fights; and as the former were generally dashed through with life and spirit, and not lengthened to a tiresome extent, which permitted energy to lag and induced lethargy, one of Bobby L—g's (a familiar phrase in use by the troopers,) field-days were looked for rather with pleasure than otherwise.

At some of the sham-fights, exhibitions were made of the dogged indisposition of the British soldier to submit to defeat; for sooner than yield to the humiliating position, angry feelings were called into play. The two wings of the regiments were usually placed in antagonism, a distinguishing mark being made by a slight dissimilarity of dress. The line of operations was chalked out; but as the result, a licking, was to be submitted to by one

side or the other, here was created the rub. To make defeat more palatable to those selected for the unenviable distinction, the tide of fortune was allowed to alternate; but still angry passions were elicited. At one of these displays on Bincomb Downs, that portion typical of our Gallic neighbours had to surrender their last hold, when security to the person became jeopardized. But did they do so? Not a bit of it, but thus remained in possession of their post till their assailants were so close upon them that only a stone wall intervened between the opposing parties; and while a rush was made at an opening by some, others blazed away with blank cartridges in each other's faces. Mischief would to a certainty have ensued had not authority interposed.

Some thirteen or fourteen years subsequently, I witnessed a similar ebullition of the angry passions at Plymouth Dock, now called Devonport. An infantry regiment was being instructed in a new system of



bayonet exercise, the supposed advantages of which, if I recollect right, consisted in being able to lunge out to a greater distance than by the method then in use; and when proficiency was supposed to have been sufficiently attained in the new, it was to be subjected to a test with the old exercise.

The arena chosen for this display was Government Square, and it was attended by General Brown and all the other officers of the garrison.

A company perfected in the novel system was placed in friendly antagonism with one from another regiment; the former had the points of their weapons disguised either by tufts of cloth or leather so saturated with some composition or another, that would indicate and leave apparent the touching point intended for perforation. But no touch was permitted; no, no, that would have been considered *infra dig.*, and was stoutly opposed, and to such an extent that the officers had to rush between

the opposing powers in order to avert mischief. It would appear that one party had fully made up their minds to repel innovation and maintain the right of letting daylight into the enemy, in the manner they had been accustomed to.

## CHAPTER III.

Remove to Suffolk—Brigade displays under Lord Paget  
—March to Romford, and preparations for service in  
the field.

IN the summer of 1807, the note of preparation was sounded for a removal of the corps from Dorsetshire. This intelligence was hailed with delight, particularly by the juniors; there was nothing sufficiently attractive in the locality to make longer continuance there desirable, and the ears of the Johnnies had been tickled by the old files into delightful anticipations of the pleasures consequent upon a long march; not only as regards change of scene and circumstances, but as partaking of the more solid advantages of

placing one's self three times a day under the landlord's mahogany, and gratifying at each and every spread, and to our heart's content, the inner man—in military phraseology, a regular “tuck out.” Moreover, there was another glorious consideration,—the abandonment for a time of the eternal, the everlasting, and seldom-satisfying brown (*quere* black?) tommy.

The realities, in this case, were essentially preserved to the hope, but not without some portions of bitter alloy, arising from the niggardly and inadequate remuneration the landlords received for these feeds—I believe then only about sixteen-pence for the trio. The natural consequence was, the opposite of a warm reception on the part of Boniface, and an alteration without any improvement in his temper. Nor can this be wondered at without arriving at the very improbable supposition, that the sensibility of a publican's feelings touching money matters are



more obtuse than other folks'. This state of things did not exist long; pity they should, for although gain by the soldier may be out of the question, security against positive loss is no more than bare justice. Let it be also understood that provisions were then at the maximum of war prices.

I have been told that on the line of roads leading to points of embarkation, publicans have been actually obliged to shut up their houses to avoid ruin. This now-a-days may seem strange, but nevertheless it was then within the range of probability. Some of the greater houses have had to provide accommodation for several hundred men; but taking a more moderate view, let a publican feed at the above rate fifty men for several successive days, possibly weeks, it needs no extraordinary powers of arithmetic to come to a pretty tolerable guess at the amount of bleeding inflicted upon the landlord's exchequer. What I have said applies

more to infantry now. For a case in point touching cavalry, while quartered in the vicinity of London in 1810 or 1811, the price of hay ranged from ten to twelve pounds a ton, and straw was proportionably high. Say the quantity allowed for each horse to be eighteen pounds of the former, there would be an outlay for that herbage alone, irrespective of straw and accommodation, of about nineteen-pence, assuming the purchase made at the lesser rate; and what, will it be believed, was the allowance munificently allowed by government? I give the range from the minimum to which I ever knew to the maximum—ten-pence to fourteen-pence!

In order not to exaggerate this monstrous grievance, assume the highest as the remunerative figure, and proofs are at once given of the actual loss sustained upon one or more animals for any given period of days, months, or weeks. Talk of soldiers being the brave defenders of

their country indeed!—why so invidiously were they placed as regards one particular class of their countrymen, as to be looked upon in no other light than oppressors. But the oppressed were Englishmen, and possessed English feelings, and although heartburnings were of necessity called into play from such a cause, they formed the exception rather than the rule.

Was not such miserable candle-end and cheese-paring economy enough to shut the respectable soldier out from sharing in the comforts of civilised life, and cause him to be looked upon more as a pest to society than a bold and independent assertor and conservator of his country's rights? The mischief of this was, moreover, that the actual parties who caused the soldier to be placed in this degrading position were screened from obloquy, and the sins of the guilty were visited upon the innocent.

On our route for Suffolk we halted for

a short time, cantoned at Hounslow and its vicinity, and after a few preparatory field-days under his Royal Highness, passed the ordeal of a review by the higher powers, including, I believe, good King George the Third.

Early in 1808, I was appointed a corporal, and my dexter arm was adorned with the distinguishing badge, and no little pride did I feel on the occasion; to say the least, it was an onward step in my path. The appointment was accompanied with a lecture of advice by the Adjutant, not only a strict disciplinarian, but a close observer and corrector of all the little infirmities, whether as regards morals or tactics, to which the non-commissioned officer is heir to, "that it would be my own fault if I did not get on."

Suffolk at that period bore a complete military aspect, and was inundated with cavalry, infantry of the line, and militia—the former under the surveillance of the



brilliant, the dashing and talented Lord Paget, the Murat of the British *sabreurs*. His Lordship's head-quarters were at Colchester, from its contiguity to the arena of his manœuvres, Rushmere Heath. I believe that we were found so tolerably cut and dried to his hand, that we had little to learn beyond moving on a more extended scale and in combination with other regiments.

Three strong regiments of hussars and a troop of flying artillery comprised the cavalry force at that time there. The rapidity of movement, sounds from so many voices in command, the clangor of trumpets and roars from cannon, the latter consequent upon completing every fresh movement for attack, produced upon me at first a bewildering sensation; but these displays were, I should say, exciting to the mind of the young soldier.

The only drawback on these stirring

scenes was felt on our return to barracks, and the clearing ourselves from the black dust of Rushmere Heath, clouds of which enveloped us in every movement. On all occasions we were covered either with dust or with mud.

There are few, I imagine, who will not admit the great value to a corps of steady and intelligent non-commissioned officers; what able auxiliaries they are, and how indispensable to the maintenance of order and discipline. To draw out and afford scope for developing the latter property, an excellent method was adopted and acted upon by his Royal Highness and Lord Paget. Selections were made, aided no doubt by suggestions of their own, from the best military writers, foreign I should say, touching the duties of light cavalry and hussars in the field and on service, appertaining more particularly to the non-commissioned officers.

These extracts were transcribed by the

latter into books of their own, and on marching-order days, generally once a week, opportunities were offered of bringing to light any advantage that had been reaped from the aforesaid method of inculcating instruction in that essential portion of light cavalry knowledge.

The regiment was split into various and separate commands, under officers and non-commissioned officers, and the varied nature of service, and operations called into play in a campaign were practised—patrolling, reconnoitring, occupying posts, guarding the approaches, planting videttes, and all other incidental steps bearing upon service in the field.

On the following day, each leader had to render to the Adjutant a written report, particularizing the duties performed by his detachment, accompanied with any other observations he might deem proper, such as describing the aspect and features of the country traversed, with reference

to either military operations, or military occupation. Now that there were on these occasions many laughable effusions penned and brought to light by the less informed, though not less zealous, is highly probable, but that is immaterial. What a chance was here given of evolving any latent talent that might otherwise have lain dormant! Sure am I that many an intelligent and aspiring mind has been crushed, paralyzed and prostrated for lack of friends or want of an opportunity to bring itself into notice. Energy and devotion to a profession has given place to apathy and indifference beyond the performance of the mere mechanical portions of duty, and the accursed canteen has been resorted to as a solace in his idle hours.

I beg it may not be inferred from what I have said, that I am desirous of pushing myself forward as a disappointed military aspirant. I repudiate and deny all such



notions. I gave my country the best return I was capable of for value received ; and if I was destined not to draw a prize, I am not in a worse position than thousands more deserving.

I cannot for a moment believe that the two noble personages I have named could have originated measures calculated to bring to light, and place in the foreground intelligence and ability without having ulterior objects in view. But supposing ability of a more than ordinary calibre was exhibited, is there a certainty of its being at all times made known in the proper quarter? Ay! there's the rub.

Our next move was to Romford ; and here the war-blast was sounded in the form of an order for the immediate preparation of eight troops for service. Now all became the recipients of new feelings, new life, new causes for excitement ; and an uninterrupted scene

of bustle and stir followed, consequent upon carrying the required arrangements into effect; grinding swords, selecting, chopping, changing, and transferring men and cattle—in short, selecting the *élite* of both the animal and *matériel* of the regiment, in order to cope more effectually with our Gallic neighbour on Spanish soil.

What swaggering on the part of those picked for the field over their less fortunate comrades doomed to vegetate in the inglorious dépôt! At this time we had a tolerable sprinkling of old files amongst us who had crossed swords with the enemy in Germany and Holland, and who were wont, in fighting their battles over again, to crack off their deeds of chivalry, and banter the Johnnies. Now arrived the time and hour for the latter to make reprisals from the prospect held out of not only having something to do, but also doing something to be talked about. However, notwith-

standing this waggery and cheerfulness apparent on the surface of affairs, there were doubtless many exceptions to the rule—many painful and agonizing feelings aroused, consequent upon the separation of man and wife. The corps numbered amongst the latter many respectable females, who would have done credit to a domestic circle comprising far superior elements than the usual occupants of a barrack-room.

Of all the measures and alterations which existed on this stirring occasion, nothing as regarded our personal comforts came up to that of relieving our craniums from an accumulation of hair of several years' growth. Here was exploded for ever that abominable system of having to depend upon getting a valet before you could emerge from your barrack-room; and preceding every parade, "tie for tie" and "plat for plat" was peeled forth from one end of the barrack to the other. Be it

known that our *head-quarters* were held sacred from the polluted touch of either Sheffield or Birmingham ware in the form of scissors. The hair was allowed to grow *ad libitum*; and as it progressed in length from an incipient stubble, that in front was platted and twisted into contact with the growth behind, and formed tributary streams to a queue; and while the corporeal substance was in movement, this said queue was either banging against the spine or waving responsive to the passing breeze. Many a poor devil who happened to be in disfavour with his comrades, and could not procure a "plat and tie," underwent the horrors of prospective punishment till some one took compassion upon him. How such a measure—(fraught as it was with annoyance and inconvenience to the soldier,) could have been thought of, much more perpetuated as it was, is inconceivable. Nevertheless, a dashing and crack regiment of Hussars preserved their flowing locks



unscathed and intact until the close of the campaign in 1814, and how much longer deponent knoweth not. The torment the Johnnies were subjected to can scarcely be believed, pending the growth and transition of his scalp from the stubble to a platting condition. Moreover, however manly in other respects the appearance of a recruit might be, the endurance of a ragged and shock head for nearly twelve months confirmed him in the look of a *raw* for at least that period.

Right well do I remember the first operation of the screwing and platting system exercised upon my devoted pate, as well as the remarks of the operator: "Keep your eyes shut, you young ——, till I have finished, or you will not be able to close them after;" and ridiculous as the admonition may seem, the screwing up of the scalp to a certain pitch may bring such a situation within the range of supposition. Much as I have said upon this said system,

the more aggravated evils thereof, are deserving of notice—those of filth and vermin, I mean.

## CHAPTER IV.

Embarkation for Spain—Landing at Corunna—Night Marches—Affairs of Cavalry at Sahagun—Majorca and Benavente—Retreat to Corunna.

ON the 30th of October, 1808, big with expectation and high in hopes and pluck, the regiment marched into the dockyard at Portsmouth; and the transport being ready, we at once embarked for Corunna to join the force under Sir David Baird. After encountering a tempestuous, and disagreeable passage—particularly in crossing that sea of mountains, the Bay of Biscay—we disembarked at Corunna on the 13th November following. The fleet of transports was separated and scattered

upon the passage ; and as possibly it took nearly a score to carry the entire of the regiment, several days elapsed before all were disembarked. I believe one or more were captured by a privateer, and the captives placed *hors de combat* for that campaign. While, lying in the harbour in sight of the town, conjecture and imagination were set agog at the strange, discordant, and screeching sounds that fell upon our ears. These proceeded from the ordinary waggon or car of the country, when in movement ; which being composed entirely of wood, the friction of the pivots of the axle in the box yielded forth these notes discordant.

Corunna not affording the means of landing our cattle high and dry, they were lowered into the water. Some were towed, and numbers swam ashore ; and did not the latter kick up their heels and show off on reaching *terra firma* ! Such prancing, such capering, such attitudenizing were exhibited, as left no doubt that the poor devils



were rioting in the pleasure of a liberation from the cribbed, cabined, and confined position from which they had just emerged.

At length the hussars' brigade, high in spirits, condition, and discipline, were prepared to pierce the mountain of Galicia, and seek the "bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth;" and if any one circumstance more than another tended to elevate the mind and give confidence to the hussar, it was that of unbounded reliance upon the known and proved talent of him who had to lead him to glory—Lord Paget. To say that he was liked by the soldier, would convey but a faint idea of his popularity; he was almost idolized—ay, worshipped by them. All had had an opportunity of witnessing his abilities as a cavalry officer; and his noble bearing, winning and captivating manner when addressing the men, secured him in the enviable enjoyment of every conceivable wish which a great and good commander could look for—the heart and affections of all under him. It was a

common expression amongst the troopers that they would follow him to —. As the place referred to smells of brimstone, I shall leave it to be guessed.

During the disastrous retreat, and somewhere between the mountains, either at the beginning or the fag-end of the day—whether objects were made barely distinguishable by twilight, moonlight, or dawn of morn, I do not recollect—but a knot of us racers *à pied*, were congregated in front of a building by the road side. A couple of mounted officers were seen slowly approaching, and as they neared us were recognized as wearing the uniform of the —th hussars. One appeared to lead the horse of the other; and although their countenances could scarcely be distinguished, the melancholy truth flashed upon all—this one must be Lord Paget. Rumours were rife that his Lordship had suffered severely in his eyes from fatigue and over-watching. This physical suffering, superadded to the bitterness that he must have felt at being

obliged to turn his back upon those whom he had on so many recent occasions faced and vanquished, must have been wormwood to the gallant soldier. To us the reflection was deep-felt and painful, and drew forth the warmest and most heartfelt sympathy.

I did not begin my actual "Sabretasch Jottings" till after landing at Lisbon, and am now constrained to make drafts upon the cells of my recollection nearly forty years over due ; and that so many should be honoured I can scarcely believe, taking into consideration that I scarcely ever conversed on or fought my battles in private. It may appear strange, but it is nevertheless true, that of the many valued private friendships I have formed in civil life, not one can come forward and vouch for knowing anything more of me than that I have been in harness—possibly have served.

I have been blamed and twitted for this silence ; but it was my whim, and I stuck to it ; not at times, I confess, without twinges of mortification, as I necessarily must have

been put down as one who might have seen a good deal, but as to anything beyond seeing, it was doubtful.

Touching our onward march to the field of glory, I have little to say. Those troublesome members of both man and animal, that require too much catering for—the bellies—were often put to the pinch; and as the very opposite of gaunt famine existed in the country, causes may be sought for in other quarters. It is well known we had any thing but an efficient and well-organized commissariat—consequently, we may be said to have alternated between feast and famine, a tuck-out and a hollow inside.

My bit of dignity was put in terrible jeopardy on one occasion; and an onslaught upon the stitches, by the penknife of the sergeant-major, was looked for with certainty. A few stages from Corunna, I had charge of the bullock-cars that conveyed the baggage and ammunition; and as



serious inconvenience had been felt, from the drivers, on several occasions, abandoning the car, and making off with the bullocks, my orders, on the score of watchfulness and vigilance, were stringent. The night of which I speak turned out foggy ; and one of those mists, impenetrable to the eye, pervaded uninterruptedly throughout. One rascally driver took advantage of this atmospherical order of things, and bolted with his pair. Here was a dilemma ; or, as a Yankee would term it, “ a regular fix ;” and how was I to face my fierce and fiery little friend, the Adjutant ?

I however came off scathless, save and except a severe and trimming reprimand.

A few words about night-marches : and mind what you say, master ex-corporal ; tread lightly, and consider that you are treating of matters concerning your betters. Well, I will tread lightly ; but have my say, I must. As we neared the supposed locality of the enemy, night-marches became more

frequent ; and although, doubtless, resorted to after due consideration, and from prudential motives, they were not the less unpalatable to the soldier ; indeed, I much question if all the advantages derived therefrom were not more than counterbalanced by opposite results. To avert that scourge and calamity—sore backs—so difficult to steer clear of in a harassing campaign, so destructive to the efficiency of a regiment, nothing is more indispensable than steady riding, bearing in mind the load the animal is burthened with, and the necessarily-heated and tender state of the beast. Now the night-march rendered steady and watchful riding no easy task. If you got no rest at night, there was little chance of getting any by day ; and notwithstanding all your efforts to shake off the drowsy god, even to pinching the tender part under the arm, he would at times rule triumphant, and swerving and rolling from side to side necessarily followed.

Some rather ludicrous scenes took place

during these night-marches. On common and ordinary occasions, it requires no little effort to shake off unwelcome drowsiness ; but here, a consciousness that you were committing a positive wrong in yielding to the sleepy influence, made the struggles and convulsive starts to ward off the enemy not only a painful but difficult task ; and there you were, grappling with and keeping up a running fight against the unmitigated attacks of your inexorable antagonist.

Well, after useless efforts, he pins you hard and fast in the land of nod. The digits of the sinister fin cease their important functions, and drop powerless upon the holsters ; the reins—which, to use a saying of the clever Colonel L—ng, ought to be managed with the “ elasticity and tension of a fishing-rod ”—became slackened ; all restraint was removed from the animal’s mouth ; and he was abandoned to his own guidance. If your steed was plucky, he stretched out his pace, and soon transported you from your true position in the ranks,

and chose a path for himself. This change of locality you are not sensible of on being aroused, for these nods and winks were not of long duration ; and you fancy you are jogging along all right, till the veil is lifted from your optics by finding yourself planted alongside one of your officers, and addressing him in the familiar phraseology of a comrade. It was no uncommon thing for troops to get partially blended ; and I have heard of regiments being placed in a like predicament—the head of one mixed up with the tail of another.

Referring to the position in which I have just left the supposed somnambulist, it may be imagined his troubles were at an end. Not a bit of it ! they were only beginning ; and the difficulties he had already encountered were mere precursors to another annoyance. Finding his proper place on a line of march, on a pitch-dark night, his imploring appeals for a knowledge of where he really was, met with derision or laughter,



and possibly an oath, as a sleepy-headed —.

Now approached the eventful hour for bringing us into actual collision with the enemy, and testing our mettle. Participants in fights must certainly be subjected to some extraordinary and contradictory obliquity of vision ; for, when detailing the events of the battle-field, two witnesses seldom view the matter in the same light. This may certainly happen on minor points ; but on more important ones, have we not the evidence of sight and sense to convince us that gallant officers go so far, in their different assertions and opinions, as to give by implication, to each other's statement, that small not, comprehended in two vowels and a consonant.

I shall, as far as possible, confine myself to what actually were my own observations, and entirely irrespective of the official accounts of the battle, which I have not seen since the time of its promulgation ;

and in thus doing, all I claim is credit for sincerity, and exoneration from a charge of wilful error.

The name of the straggling (and if I recollect aright the principally mud-built) and any thing but respectable village that gave quarters to the King's Hussars on the night of the 20th December, 1808, I quite forget. It was about the hour of midnight, when without blast of bugle we were roused from our roosts and assembled on the alarm-post known to every one before dispersion into quarters. Of the real cause of our being thus aroused, we were ignorant; but as coming events generally cast their shadows before, a general presentiment pervaded that mischief was brewing. We assembled in order, and without confusion; for so well had our clever Adjutant marshalled and trained his carriers, that all the points (heads of troops) were communicated with simultaneously, and thence to all the more subordinate; and herein

was displayed the inimitable squad regulations of Colonel L—g.

I have not selected a very happy moment to descant upon the excellence of the squadding method when upon the point of relating the incidents of a battle ; but the matter happens to be uppermost, and the carrying out of the system appears of such vital importance to the true discipline of a regiment, that I must crave pardon for the digression.

The insisting upon the working of the squadding system in accordance with the very letter and spirit of its intentions, was mainly instrumental in enabling Colonel L—g to effect so many salutary and radical changes in so short a time in his regiment. But the real merits and advantages of such a measure were never so apparent to me as when I first entered upon the functions of a troop sergeant-major.

I may be thought guilty of a little egotism here ; but if not thought correct in my

statement, there are some high in rank who can either affirm or contradict. But so sensible did I become of its excellence, that as far as my limited authority extended, the troop once squadded remained intact, and no change was permitted except from particular and sufficient causes. Whether in barracks, quarters, or on the line of march, the sergeant held his own squad, and was more or less held accountable for their conduct.

The measure was not lost sight of in billeting. On the arrival of the troop at its destination for the day, the *fourrier* handed each squad leader his billets; the troop split at once into sections; and whether a hundred or a score of men had to be dispatched to their quarters, it mattered not as to time.

A spirit of emulation (I mean the essential, not the burnishing of a buckle nor heel-balling of a pouch) is the very pith and marrow, ay, the life and soul of mili-



tary discipline ; and if that feeling be thoroughly inculcated and brought into play, no invidious comparisons or heart-burnings need arise.

In making a march (say in the winter months, when all the preparatory measures of grooming, feeding, and harnessing are to be performed by candle-light) if a drowsy fellow has overslept himself, he is placed on the horns of a dilemma—between the consequences of being too late for parade, or depriving his steed of the advantage of either grooming or time to munch his ration. It needs no ghost to tell us which of the horns would be resorted to. I have had sergeants so zealous, so intent not only on having their squad ready for the road at the appointed moment, but on seeing that justice done as to grooming and feeding, that the first step after shaking off their own feathers was to run round their squads, arouse the sleepy from their beds, and see all at their post. What more offensive

to the military eye, more derogatory to the character and discipline of a regiment, than to witness at the place of assembly men dropping one by one into their place in squadron, when the body ought to have made miles on the intended route.

One of our night-marches was the very opposite of an agreeable one. It was bitterly and intensely cold, and as far as I can judge was conducted and *corkscrewed* throughout as it were by paths and narrow lanes, now *à cheval*, now *à pied*. Sometimes we had to lead our horses in single file even over a narrow bridge that daylight might have made one shudder to look upon. All was silent; the stillness of night was only interrupted by the continuous pattering of the horses' hoofs upon the snow, the muffled clink (we were cloaked) of spur and scabbard, scabbard and spur, or an inner growl accompanied by a naughty word at the stumbling of man or animal on our uneven track.

As the grey of morn dawned upon us, we

seemed to emerge from our narrow path into more open ground. The silence hitherto maintained was now interrupted by hummings, buzzing, whispering, and indistinct sounds of human voices. Then followed the words of command—"Form divisions! Wheel into line!" A dark living mass was in front, not to be plainly distinguished by the eye: onward we rushed. Then followed a plunge—a crash—a clatter—hacking and hewing, and the devil to pay.

Hard knocks indeed were given and received; and when the curtains of darkness were fairly withdrawn, frightful gashes and streams of gore were made visible, as also other features consequent upon such a sharp rencontre. Horses galloping about *sans* riders, riders *à pied* running after their horses; the moans and tortures of the wounded writhing in anguish from a cold and freezing atmosphere—the dying and the dead!

The onslaught and carving of the first

course scarcely exceeded twenty minutes, and before we had re-formed, the head of a column was observed shooting from the end of a street into the main road. A view halloo was pealed forth from hundreds of throats, and troops were knotting together for a second course.

The troop to which I belonged—Captain D—'s—happened to be nearest the *débouche*-ment of the enemy. When a score or two had mustered, up galloped our Adjutant with his head tied up, and ordered chase to be given. Away we went. The inequalities of the ground were masked by snow; and dashing at what appeared a ridge of that fragile material, we were precipitated into a broad ditch, not deep certainly, but sufficiently so to put us *hors de combat* for a few minutes. Saddles were ingloriously emptied, and men and horses rolled in the snow. My animal, any thing but a plucky one, fell on his side, and pinned me to the earth for some seconds.

Independent of local obstacles, our foe

had too much the start of us, and lived to fight another day. Much was said at the time about that indispensable provision, a reserve, which should never be lost sight of, but go hand in hand with a fight. The absence of such a force was in this case bitterly felt : all would assuredly have been *nabbed*, had such a force been available at the moment. It can scarcely be imagined that such talented leaders as Lord Paget and Colonel Grant, who led us into the fight, would overlook so necessary a military precaution ; and it was said, a squadron had been named as a reserve. All I know of the matter is what I gathered from a non-commissioned officer of the said squadron, which purported that all the efforts of the gallant leader to keep his men in check were powerless ; follow their comrades they would—follow them they did—and they rushed on and participated in the glories of the morn.

The results of this brilliant little affair amounted to about twenty killed, about



two hundred prisoners, including thirteen officers—of whom two Lieutenant-Colonels. Our force scarcely exceeded three hundred ; the enemy were double that number at least, if not nearly treble. I have no means of getting at the casualties of our regiment, but have no reason to believe they were very great.

One poor fellow (Hawkins) I think, received over half a score of sabre-cuts, indeed may be said to have been almost made mince-meat of ; still, notwithstanding the precipitous retreat which so soon ensued, he lived to reach Haslar hospital. Another trooper (Vokins) had a frightful cut across his face. This poor fellow was discovered lying on his back in the snow, and at first sight the cut he had received seemed of such magnitude as to give an appearance of his face having been divided into two parts, from a abre-cut across his nose and into his cheeks. Sergeant Chettle and myself tied up his wound, and he was ultimately restored to health and his duty.

He has since told me, the only inconvenience he felt arose from twinges experienced on a change of weather,—so that the wounded part may be said to act as a barometer.

Lord Paget's intentions had been to take by surprise a body of General Debelle's cavalry, occupying Sahagun ; to effect which we had made a circuitous route to gain the rear of the town. Another corps was to march direct upon it. Our advanced guard fell in with and captured a French piquet, except one of the covey, who flew off and gave the alarm ; and hence the state of preparation to receive us on the part of the enemy at that early hour. Not a doubt but all of them would have been caught napping, but for the escape of that one bird.

A question—and really a very silly one, more easily put than answered either conscientiously or satisfactorily—is often asked of a soldier, namely, “what were his sensations on first going to battle?” If your imagination on that momentous

occasion should have been slightly haunted by a *white featherish* sort of feeling, why zounds ! it is not likely that it would be revealed. Then again, if you were a regular fire-eater of the first water, modesty would forbid the declaration of such a property. Then what can you say ? All I recollect of my sensation solely pertained to the temperature of the blood. So benumbed was I with cold, that for fear of losing the grip of the sword, I twisted the buff knot to an extent that became painful to my wrist ; but this proved a bootless precaution, for on wheeling into line for the charge, the temperature of the fluid mounted at once from below zero to the boiling point. A more sudden transition, no ingenuity of art or contrivance could have caused—not even a plunge into a warm-bath.

The first tapping of our enemy's claret produced no little life and spirits, and all had abundance to talk about. In three little days after this brush, however, gloom and disappointment took the place of sunshine

and cheerfulness ; and the order to retreat, which began on the 24th, was kept up with additional and aggravated circumstances till Corunna was visible.

An attempt was made to intercept our retreat at Majorca by a body of Ney's cavalry. The leading regiment on the retreat, the —th hussars, however, made a gallant and successful charge, overthrowing and capturing over a hundred prisoners. We were brought forward at an increased and smart pace, passed through the town, and at a short distance met our companions retiring, covered with glory and high in spirits.

At this time our horses were rather heavily laden with rations of corn which had been just issued. With a view of lending speed to their animals and going less encumbered into the fight, numbers dropped their corn-sacks at houses in the different streets through which they passed, meaning to pick them up on their return. I was nearly falling into the like unwise measure, but was overruled by the advice of the Quarter-

Master, an old campaigner, who foresaw the mischievous effects of hazarding the animal's food to such a contingency. He was no false prophet ; for few recovered their sacks, and loud and long were the complaints ; but there was no time to insist upon a restitution of the rations.

On or about the 28th December, after crossing the Esla, and taking up cantonments at a village on the banks of the river and in the vicinity of Benavente, we were suddenly assembled and moved towards the bridge in order to arrest the advance of the enemy. On reaching the plain, we found all that was required had been already done by Lord Paget and Sir Charles Stewart, who had met and repulsed about six hundred of the Imperial Guards ; making them retrace their steps by an aquatic trip across the river, and leaving their General, Lefebvre, on the wrong side.

Rather an amusing scene presented itself on the plain, in the person of Colonel Eley, a tall and powerful officer, who gave a German



hussar a most unmerciful thrashing with the flat of his sword. The man was dismounted, and in the act of easing the contents of a Frenchman's valise of its valuables instead of being with his regiment. Being loath to quit his prize, he stuck to the valise, shifting and dodging from one side of the animal to the other to escape the whacks of the acting Adjutant-General's sabre, who succeeded, however, in making the hussar abandon his prize and scamper off to his corps.

Every succeeding day's march brought in its train accumulated miseries. Horses were being constantly destroyed, either from sore backs or want of shoes, principally the latter; and it was no uncommon sight to witness the poor animals ridden with the blood gushing from their hoofs. I was unlucky enough to lose my animal before passing through La Baneza, and had to console myself with the cheerless prospect of *padding the hoof* to Corunna.

Necessary though cruel measures were

now taken to destroy such horses as were pronounced incapable of making another march. They were not honoured with the munitions of war to release them from their miserable existence; the approximation of our inexorable and never-let-us-alone pursuers willed it that the work of destruction should be perpetrated without noise, and the sledge-hammer and knife became the instruments of death.

As we entered the town of La Baneza at one end, a detachment of fresh troops under an officer who had been left behind at Corrunna entered it at the other end, and both bodies met in the town. The contrast was striking—indeed laughable. One body was redolent with polish, pipeclay, and Day and Martin; the lustre of the other—*oh tempora! oh mores!*—so grimy, so bedimmed, as to give the appearance of having had a chimney-sweeper's soot-bag shook over them. What a satire upon soldiering, when they are breathing the very legitimate atmosphere of their pro-

fession, the war-field, that they could not maintain a decent appearance for forty-eight consecutive hours without being plastered with pipe-clay.

A cavalry soldier is reduced to the state of a sorry animal, and quite out of his element when constrained to make his march on foot. Not only are his equipments ill adapted for the performance, but his disinclination and want of practice render the alternative most unpalatable.

Booted and spurred as I was, loaded with as great a portion of arms and necessities as I could manage to toddle under, I scrambled on by hook or by crook till I reached Astorga, where I got relieved from further padding the hoof; but in a way, I confess, not particularly creditable or soldier-like. Acts of relaxation from stern discipline had become so frequent—the more so when the question of *meum* and *tuum* arose—that I fancy I must have been slightly inoculated with the malady, and

rather looked to the end in the fulfilment of my wishes than the means.

On reaching the outskirts of the town, I passed a lonely building, and on looking in at the window discovered, by the light of a solitary lamp suspended from the ceiling, that I had hit upon a stable,—its inmates mules. The advantages of riding over walking were inwardly discussed ; and very little time did it take to solve the problem and jump to a conclusion. Seeing no one in charge, I coolly proceeded to make my election of a prad, liberated it from the manger, and just wheeled his head round to where his tail had stood, when up starts from the straw under the manger a tall and swarthy muleteer, who at once showed his teeth and stoutly disputed my claim to the selection I had made. And now came on a regular pull devil, pull baker affair, in which I should to a dead certainty have come off second best, had I not found an auxiliary at hand, private Oaks, I think. His aid turned the tide

of fortune in my favour, and I bore off my prize in triumph. My poor thews and sinews were an ill-match for the wirey and tough frame of the hardy muleteer; and the chances were, that I should have paid the penalty of my daring in something little short of a twisted neck.

On the assembling of my troop in the square on the following morning, I sported my figure perched upon my ill-gotten plunder before the Captain, and obtained his permission to make the best of my way. Captain D—e was a kind-hearted officer; and although I really believe he suspected that I had transgressed in the matter of *mine* and *thine*, received my assurance to the contrary, without remark.

I learned on the following day that the mule was a baggage-animal belonging to an officer of rank, English or Spanish, and that no little stir and inquiry had been made after the delinquent; and right lucky was the said delinquent in having such a fair start of his enemy. Detection and capture



would in all probability have exalted him to an unenviable altitude, and produced that particular sort of disease called a "crick in the neck." Marauding in fact was becoming so prevalent, so utterly destructive to order and discipline, that the Commander-in-Chief found it imperative to make some terrible examples.

Astorga at that moment was crowded to excess with the defeated and dispersed army of the Marquess Romana ; and apart from their physical appearance, a more wretched military display can scarcely be imagined. Not a man did I encounter that did not exhibit some glaring deficiency in military equipment as regarded either clothing, arms, or accoutrements ; and as to their muskets, they seemed to partake of the property of that of the " Highland man, requiring stock, lock, and barrel." Poor fellows ! their forlorn and dejected appearance must have enlisted the sympathy and compassion of all except

such as had not the manliness to "feel for another." Pure patriotism, combined with an inextinguishable hatred of the invaders of their soil, could alone have prompted them to abandon their homes and enroll themselves for battle in defence of the common cause. But with all the advantage of their moral force, their martial appearance, when compared with the well disciplined, well commanded, well accoutred legions of *him* to whom they were opposed, gave forcible and unerring indication of what may naturally be looked for—of what generally took place—defeat, if not annihilation.

My steed did not possess the advantage of having undergone the probationary course of the *manège*, and it required no little effort and skill to guide it under the *pressing* circumstances I am about to narrate. After passing through Bembitre—notorious for the excesses committed there—the road was so choked and

crammed with regular and straggling bodies of troops of all descriptions, as to make navigation through such a motley living mass, a work of no ordinary difficulty. In the opposite direction Sir Charles Stewart was returning, attired in the splendid uniform of his regiment and accompanied by some of his staff; and in order to make room for the cortège, all the powers of the tendon Achilles, in conjunction with the Brummagem persuader, were put in requisition fruitlessly. The aristocratic leg of a Brigadier-General was doomed to be jammed by the plebeian limb of a bit of a corporal of hussars; and what a withering and wrathful look the poor little devil drew upon his devoted head—not unaccompanied, I believe, with a naughty expression or two. Sir Charles was a brave and gallant soldier; his regiment was proud of him, and well they might be.

Lugo was at length gained, and there also

a few days' rest. Here the gloom and sulkiness, which had hitherto been so generally conspicuous, was in a manner dissipated by an order to brush up and look out for a fight. We of the dismounted were directed to put the flint and steel of our carbines in ignitable order, be prepared to shoulder them, and march to glory.

This sunny and cheering aspect of affairs however soon vanished ; and on the 9th the race was resumed with, if possible, an aggravation of excesses, disorders, and miseries. What an anomalous being is the British soldier !—daring, intrepid, reckless of life or limb when called upon to give fight ; yet wanting, in the hour of adversity, the moral courage to treasure up of his own accord, and without incessant watching and controlling, his powers and capabilities for the hour of need.

It is not the characteristic of the British nation to abandon themselves to despondency and to despair under adverse circum-

stances ; quite the reverse. Then why should not the British soldier—in birth, in breed, in blood, bone, and sinew thoroughly English—inherit, in common with his countrymen, that invaluable moral courage, which grapples with rather than sinks and gives way to the vicissitudes—the ups and downs of life. There is something radically wrong, my masters, either in the training or constitution of an army so beset with evils. I speak of bygone times ; but it would seem a re-enactment of the tragedy performed in the mountains of Gallicia took place on the plains of Spain several years subsequently.

Before reaching Corunna, I and a comrade were making a ride-and-tie march with my little nag, when the tortures of hunger and an empty havresack became no longer endurable, and a rather inquisitorial search was made amongst the cottages and dwellings that dotted the sides of the mountains, for “ *quelque chose pour manger.*” On retreating from one whose occupant



was a weaver, we had scarcely re-crossed the threshold of his door when our ears were saluted by a loud and shrill cock-a-doodle-doo ! from some hidden locality.

Talk of the power, the wonderful influence of sweet sounds upon the animal spirits ! Why the rich tones of a Braham, the divine and ravishing strains of a Storace, the thrilling notes elicited from the catgut of a Lindley or a Paganini, would have been as villanous and unacceptable as the croaks of a raven, compared to the delicious piping of glorious chanticleer, whose hiding-place was soon discovered. The bird escaped our first attempt to clutch him, and darted and ensconced himself amongst the wefts, warps, looms, and shuttles of the weaver ; and now began a regular chase on our parts—fingers *versus* feathers. Our sport was interrupted by a chuckle from behind, and on looking around, there sat the old shrivelled piece of parchment, the weaver, enjoying our disappointment, his small black eyes, deep sunk in his skull,

twinkling and sparkling with delight, and making the best effort he could at a risible display by a pair of toothless gums. It certainly might have been sport to him, but the very opposite to us—a brace of hungry hussars, labouring under a hollowness akin to a drum. A threat of practising the twisting system upon his weasand as well as on that of his bird changed the weaver's note, and he gave us the benefit of his assistance in capturing our prize, which was made (to use a Jonathanism) “quick as wink” fit for culinary operations.

On or about the 11th we made our place of destination, and were put up in St. Lucia; and what a melancholy display did the King's hussars now make as contrasted with their efficient and soldier-like appearance a few weeks before! Then high in spirits, flushed and big with expectation and hope of adding more wreaths to the laurels already won, the *esprit du corps* pervading all, and proudly and pre-emi-

nently conspicuous ; now, alas ! they may have been said to be with little exaggeration almost horseless, bootless, shoeless, ragged, dirty, and something worse !

The ground in the vicinity of Corunna was quite impracticable for the operations of cavalry. Indeed had it been otherwise, *that* arm may be said to have been *hors de combat*. Most of the animals having become unserviceable from causes already enumerated, it was deemed merciful as well as necessary to destroy them, rather than abandon them to new task-masters ; and of ours, I do not think more than a score or two out of six hundred which we had originally, were destined to return to their native land, to restore their skeleton carcasses upon English oats and hay.

On the 13th I was pitched upon to take charge of a detachment of dismounted foragers, for the purpose of fetching some straw from a magazine remote from the quarters of the regiment, with the strictest

injunctions to keep the men together and to prevent straggling and marauding, so prevalent had become the habit of picking and stealing and disregard of rights. In passing through the streets an explosion took place which caused the earth to rock as if an earthquake had taken place. Another explosion soon followed, more terrible and alarming in its effects than the first. The earth seemed to rock to and fro, houses tottered, windows and loose fragments strewed the streets, horror and consternation, in fact, were depicted upon the countenances of all. Those out of doors prostrated themselves in the streets; while the shrieks and moans of those inside were appalling. On gazing in the direction whence the sounds proceeded, a magnificent and imposing sight met the eye—two immense columns of dark smoke arose, soaring slowly and majestically on high till they vanished and curled into nothingness.

During the foregoing events, my attention was drawn off from the duty I had to perform; and upon examining the state of my party, nearly the whole of them had disappeared, with what intentions and views deponent knoweth not; but I was left nearly alone in my glory. As luck would have it, the men knew the locality of the magazine from its contiguity to the quarter occupied by the regiment before quitting Corunna, and in course of a short time all were at their posts, otherwise good bye to my small authority. For the non-performance of the duty I was entrusted with, no excuse would have been admitted even had the town rattled about our ears.

I say nothing about the battle of the 16th, and for the best of all possible reasons—I know nothing about it, beyond hearing the thunder emitted from the cannon's mouth.

On that day I had to proceed with four men on duty to the town; and when ready



to move off, an empty boat with its complement of oars was observed fastened to the pier, dancing most invitingly upon the waters. In we jumped, unfastened and rowed across the bay to a point of disembarkation contiguous to the field of duty.

Our first proceeding was to convey a young officer, who had joined shortly previous to our embarkation, from his quarters in town, where he lay sick, to a boat in readiness to carry him to a transport. He appeared exceedingly ill, and so debilitated that we had to carry him in a blanket down a stone slope of some distance to the water's edge ; and from the roughness and turbulence of the sea and the dancing up and down of the boat, he was with no little difficulty deposited without harm therein.\*

\* I was in such a position for several years afterwards, with regard to this gentleman, as gave me opportunities of recalling this circumstance to his recollection,

We were next ordered to superintend the conveyance of Colonel Eley's baggage from his quarters in the town to the water's edge, and before we had completed the foregoing affairs and were ready to return, dusk came on. I believe the whole of us may in the strictest sense and meaning of the term be said to have been "fresh-water sailors;" and after pulling away for a length of time in what we considered the right direction, we discovered to our dismay that we were entirely wrong. In short, we became completely bewildered in the bay by the twinkling and will-o'-the-wispish appearance of the lights that surrounded us. All had given their advice in turn—all had

conceiving it would look like seeking laudation for the performance of an act that came strictly within my line of duty. Nor should I now advert to the affair, were it not associated with other recollections of the same party, which will be touched upon by and by. He had a miraculous escape from a cruel death, several years afterwards, in France.

failed ; and it was at length agreed upon *nem. con.*, that as the tide set inwards we should lay aside our oars, and trust to Providence for a safe deliverance from our aquatic perils.

On were we driven, surging along, till bump came our skiff upon *terra firma*. We hauled up high and dry, and reconnoitred our new locality. Nothing met the eye but high and dark gloomy-looking walls, only relieved by the peeping of the muzzles of a few cannon through their embrasures. No outlet by land seemed available ; and we began to think that, in submitting ourselves to the vagaries of the watery god, we had jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire, with the not very agreeable chances of being sent into eternity bit by bit, as the waters were advancing. The power of lungs was tried. This brought a Spanish sentinel to one of the embrasures, to whom we made known our situation, and we were soon relieved by being hauled up by a rope, one by

one. I believe the corporal was the first to make the escalade, assisted in his flight by the application of a pair of oars *au derrière*.

We roosted for the night in the guard-room, and right glad were we to drop down upon the softest boards it afforded. At peep of day I was up and stirring, in order to ascertain our whereabouts; and on proceeding to the battlement, I saw our little skiff being dragged to the water's edge by a party of sailors, who were uttering curses long and loud against the thieves who had made free with their boat. Of course I did not reveal myself as one of the delinquents, and entered into a parley with them. They stated that they had only quitted their boat, after making it fast, for a short time on the preceding day, and on returning to proceed to their vessel, the means of conveyance had vanished; that they had been in search of her ever since, under the penalty of a stoppage from their

pay equivalent to the value of the boat, unless found.

I certainly felt vexed at giving the poor fellows so much trouble and annoyance ; but found relief to my troubled conscience in the reflection, that after all it was only an affair of borrowing, with an absence of all felonious intention.



## CHAPTER V.

Embark for and land in England—Re-equipment of the regiment—Home service, and domestic broils.

ON the 17th Jan., 1809, all were on board, and an uncommon bustle, stir, and consternation was apparent amongst the transports in the bay on being cannonaded from the land by the enemy. Cut and run was the order of the moment ; and our Captain, in common with many others, separated from his anchor, and the breeze being propitious, we spread our canvas to the winds, and steered out of the harbour, and also harm's way. Several transports, in their anxiety and hurry to get out of the reach of the

ugly missiles hissing and flying about them, got upon a ridge of rocks, and I believe were abandoned to the enemy.

As several weeks had gone by without an opportunity of peeling or indulging in a wash, those refreshing and invigorating operations were now put in practice.

Our transport had on board most of the sick and convalescents of the regiment, and was therefore designated the Hospital Ship. To many it proved their last living home; for it happened that on several mornings successively a poor fellow was found dead, and committed to the deep. So silent and stealthy was the work of death upon some occasions, that the comrade who had measured his length alongside of an invalid, discovered to his horror, on the return of daylight that the vital spark had winged its flight from the earthly tenement of his neighbour, and nought remained but a cold and lifeless mass of mortality.

We had a sad wicked fellow on board. He

was not wicked in the literal meaning of the term, but as far as fun, mischief, or devilment went, he could almost extract a grin from grim death himself, by the muscular contortions of a countenance naturally rather ill-favoured, but well adapted for "Grimaldi" freaks. This was no other than "Cocky Moay." He won this prefix by the inimitable manner in which he could mimic the crowing of a cock. Indeed so faithful was the resemblance, that had the powers of each, man or bird, been tested unseen, it would have been difficult to have distinguished the real from the spurious "Simon Pure."

Cocky was hospital orderly, and attended the excellent Doctor L—e in his daily visitations to the sick. On separating, and after giving all particular directions, the finish of the good Doctor's orders generally ended with "Well, Moay, go on as usual," uttered in his peculiar quiet way. This turned out a capital hint for the orderly to

exercise his fun upon ; and posting off to the poor fellow who appeared to be next on the list, first imitated the flapping of wings, and then sent forth such a shrill cock-a-doodle-doo ! that it rang from end to end of the hold. He then inquired of the invalid if he had heard the Doctor's directions. A negative was given by a silent shake of the head, followed up by an inquiring glance. Cocky then, with a grimace and countenance that would almost have scared Old Nick himself, warned him to be prepared for committal to the deep on the following morn.

Our homeward-bound passage was rough, gusty, and disagreeable. The fleet of transports got dispersed, and made various ports on the English coast. Our vessel, as also several others, steered into the Sound, and we were landed at Plymouth Dock on the 30th January, 1809. The sick and incapables being deposited in Haslar Hospital, a motley and queer-looking group of

several score of the King's hussars were prepared to march *à pied* and join the home squadron. I believe we only mustered one solitary animal as a trooper, belonging to Private King, to whom no little praise was due for the care he had taken of it.

The whereabouts of the *depôt* was not known with certainty. Rumour said Dorchester; but to avoid making a fruitless and unnecessary *détour*, I was sent off mounted upon our only steed, and on arriving at that city, ascertained that the *depôt* had removed to Romford. It soon got wind in the city that one of the participators in the *Corunna races* had arrived; and I fancy his rather Quixotish appearance must have removed all doubt from the most sceptical. Be it as it may, the few hours I remained there I was lionized to my heart's content.

On dropping in with the detachment on the line of march, I was spared the no very agreeable toil of participating in their



infantry movement, by being appointed *fourrier*, and travelling *à cheval*.

At Romford lots of shaking of hands and warm greetings from our comrades of the home squadron ensued. Then were the shoulders of all set freely to work for restoring the regiment to service condition. No come-day, go-day, God-send-Sunday goings on ; energy and emulation pervaded all. His Royal Highness was often with us, and shared barrack accommodation. With such able and willing materials to work with, it ceases to create surprise that an incredibly short space of time elapsed before we were again in the saddle.

Some fantastical and antiquated measures, more honoured in the breach than the observance, were dispensed with ; one in particular as regards the re-mounts. It had formerly been the practice to exclude mares almost entirely from the ranks ; as also confining every troop to a sameness of colour

distinct from the others. Now, the animals were purchased irrespective of either sex or color, and balloted for in like manner by the different Captains ; and this was a far more equitable method of filling up than heretofore, for it secured to all an equal chance. Moreover, there was something more in colour than mere name ; and prejudices ran strong in favour of brown muzzles and dark bays, as possessing more stamina and endurance of fatigue than the chesnuts or light bays. In speed only was the palm generally accorded to the latter colours.

Then again, the black leather appointments for the horse, which seldom looked decent except when fresh from the influence of " Warren " or " Day and Martin," were replaced by brown leather ; which could be at all times kept passable in appearance, and with little trouble and annoyance to the soldier. Moreover, on the score of economy and endurance, the

brown beat the black hollow; what tended to keep the former clean, nourished its properties and preserved its pliability. To maintain and keep the other in accordance with the notions and expectations of *some*, required such frequent applications of the black fluid as to reduce the leather to a perishable state in a short time.

To ascertain what is really useful to the soldier, as well as what may with advantage be dispensed with or altered, nothing is so necessary as breathing the atmosphere of an active campaign; particularly as regards the article of dress, the absurdities of which in some particulars, although passing muster at home, may be found an insufferable nuisance in the field.

In the middle of 1809, I mounted a second step in the ladder of promotion by being made Sergeant. This appointment was accompanied with a reiteration of the advice formerly dealt out to me by the Adjutant: "Take care of yourself; be

assiduous, faithful, and zealous in the discharge of your duties, if you wish to preserve a continuance of my friendship."

What a stimulant, what an incentive to a correct course of conduct, is induced when harked and cheered on by a friendly and patronising hand! Under such sunny considerations, there are no difficulties which one cannot with cheerfulness encounter and overcome.

While in the vicinity of London we picked up a tolerable sprinkling of recruits from the "great village;" some of whom were wild colts, whose military enthusiasm at the outset of their career proved not of a very endurable nature, and soon cooled down. Desertions became frequent, and severe examples to such as were caught were resolved upon.

Upon the occasion of two young soldiers abandoning their colours, I was selected to give chase, and if possible effect a capture. I had to doff my military and don a

civilian's dress, more easily ordered than accomplished; that is, according to my own notions, for I plumed myself touching the gentility of my appearance. I believe among other voluntary contributors the master tailor was the principal one.

On making my appearance at the Adjutant's apartment, there sat His Royal Highness, for I had to receive my instructions direct from the lips of royalty. To the best of my recollection the concluding sentence of his Royal Highness's commands was, "Mind, corporal, the ladies don't smoke you." Talk of five feet five and three-quarters, indeed! why I'll bet that when strutting across the barrack-yard after this interview, in my borrowed plumes, although my real altitude did not exceed that height, my ideas soared a mighty deal higher—more likely sky high.

The only known clue to the runaways was the presence in the town of two dashing



London female acquaintances—whether of the *pavé*, deponent knoweth not ; but it was their movements I had to watch as likely to lead to a caption. After lying *perdu* for several hours, and until light turned into grey, *they* at length made their appearance on the pulling up of a London coach at the inn door. Whilst the ladies mounted the box, I by a corresponding movement ascended into the basket. Blast went the horn, crack sounded the whip, and onwards were whirled pursuer and pursued—chased and chaser, coverable by a sheet.

The ladies descended in Whitechapel, as likewise did I, and followed close at their heels. Nimbly they threaded their way through the crowded thoroughfares leading in a direct line from the city, whilst I strained my very eye-balls till they ached again, for fear of losing sight of them. Passing from the bottom of Snow-hill to Holborn, my quarry suddenly and at once vanished from my view ; and I was

compelled to abandon the chase as hopeless, got fleeced myself in place of gathering wool, and not without manifest misgivings of unpleasant consequences to myself; but I fancy the ticklish nature of the duty pleaded for me as a sufficient apology for its failure.

If it be true, as is said, that "love sways the court, the camp, the grove," what I am about to narrate may not be considered altogether out of place. Be it as it may, had affairs taken a different turn to what they did, my future fortunes would in no slight degree have been affected, whether for better or worse it is difficult to say; but if ever poor devil was bewitched and enchained, pierced, pummelled, and pounded in the mortar of the amorous god, such was I.

When quartered in a town within one hundred miles from the smoke of London, the house adjoining my billet was inhabited by a respectable tradesman, whose

back apartments overlooked the stable-yard; and it being summer time, the operations of grooming generally went on out of doors. Although the animal was the proper object of attention, the orbs of sight occasionally wandered elsewhere, and could not fail to detect a pair of pretty mild blue eyes shedding their lustre on me from above. Telegraphic signs and responses soon followed; stolen interviews were effected, the more delicious from being stolen; all was bliss and prospective happiness. My poor exchequer was a sad sufferer certainly during these amatory proceedings. That I had the best groomed nag in the yard I'll wager; for anything short of raining cats and dogs would not deter me from tying my steed outside three times a day. My extraordinaries of expenditure, under the items "curry combs and brushes," the books of the quarter gave written evidence of—the excess of clean shirts beyond the prescribed regimental quan-

tity, my washerwoman could give oral testimony of; for the other indispensables to cleanliness of appearance, such as pipe-clay and blacking, my own *ipse dixit* may be relied upon. What! roll up the sleeves of unclean linen, exhibit a pair of soiled unmentionables, or lacklustre shoes, with such a lovely countenance beaming upon me? Perish such a thought!

Affairs went on swimmingly; and doubtless I considered that I had gained a hundred per cent in value by narrowing the width of disparity heretofore existing between a bit of a corporal of hussars and a respectable tradesman's daughter. Then came the route, which caused arrangements to be made for carrying on an epistolary correspondence; a town agent, or supposed confidant, was sought for and found, who shamefully betrayed the trust reposed in him by delivering my first amatory epistle into the hands of papa! Could I not have pistolled the party at the time? Ay, with greater

relish than have applied food to a hungry stomach. Subsequent reflection, however, softened down these angry feelings, and I am fain to think it was really a friendly act. A regular explosion ensued ; and ever after, at least while in harness, I eschewed all thoughts of the noose matrimonial, and becoming a Benedick.

Some time in 1810, we were performing what is called King's duty, occupying Hounslow barracks, town, and environs, and furnishing when required escorts for King George in his transit from Windsor to London, and *vice versâ*, travelling at a spanking pace. At this time Sir Francis Burdett was about to be sent to the Tower, and apprehensions of a disturbance of the peace caused our removal to Pimlico, and as many as the riding-school could hold were crammed therein ; the rest in contiguous quarters. Detachments were furnished to patrol and keep in order and subjection the hubbub and tumult in Picca-



dilly. On our first appearance we were received with apparent (mock) enthusiasm, hailed and cheered by mob majesty, and comparisons drawn in favour of what they designated us, "the little hairy-mouthed fellows," at the expense of the feelings of the household brigade, whose harassing and unpleasant duties in the maintenance of order and repression of outrages, had drawn upon them hatred and abuse.

The affectionate regards of the mob towards us at the outset were doomed to be of short duration, and a more truthful and genuine display of temper soon took place. When the worthy Baronet had to be unkenelled, as it was then called, by the civil power, a squadron of our regiment preceded and followed the carriage. This burst asunder all bonds of mob amity, and was followed by a reversal of their former verdict in our favour. Their rabid fury knew no bounds, and they not only pelted us with abuse but with missiles. On cross-

ing Tower Hill a knot of scoundrels ensconced themselves behind some railings, and brick-batted us to more than our hearts' content.

To what an unnatural and ferocious pitch feelings of hatred against the soldier were engendered and fostered may be imagined by the following incident. Myself and a comrade visited a barber's shop in Knightsbridge with a view to get the stubble removed from our chins, when the hero of soap-suds exhibited in strong and unmistakeable colours the red-hot nature of his politics ; for after flourishing his "Sheffield" in a menacing manner, he drew the back of it across his weasand, exclaiming that he would "willingly cut our throats ; but as to shaving, he would see us d—d first."

In the years 1811 and 1812, the regiment had harassing duty to perform in the suppression of Luddism in Nottinghamshire and adjoining counties. Of all the services which a soldier is called upon to perform,

there is none so unpalatable to him as that of waging war against a domestic enemy. Credit the military seldom get, be the results what they may; but rather odium on almost all occasions, from the nature of the functions to be performed. If lenient, and excesses follow, the soldier is blamed for apathy, and denounced as one paid by his country undeservedly; if energetic and vigorous, he makes a severe example or two, and thereby prevents the perpetration of mischief, he is characterised as blood-thirsty; although his promptitude in the emergency might not only have prevented the destruction of much property, but also the loss of many lives.

In putting down a mob or any popular tumult, stern necessity and a strict sense of duty may render it imperative on the soldier to tinge his sword with the blood of his countrymen; but such as imagine he takes pleasure in such feats, and that they are not revolting to his feelings and inclinations, do him gross injustice.

From what has come within my own observation and knowledge, I am inclined to the opinion that tumultuous assemblages for unlawful purposes can readily be put down by military, with whatever disparity of numbers. The cause of the former is bad, and they are sensible of it; and this fact alone goes far towards defeat, if properly grappled with at the beginning, and an unmistakeable demonstration by the military made at the first blush of the affair. But once begin to temporize—show a wavering or irresolute disposition—impunity is immediately given to daring; and extreme and painful measures must then of necessity be resorted to, which otherwise might have been spared.

When the news of the lamented assassination of Mr. Percival reached Nottingham, inflammatory devices and placards stuck upon poles were paraded through the streets; and a vast multitude congregated in the market-place. The nearest and most immediately available military body

consisted of a picket of 12th Hussars and myself, stationed at an inn in the town. Out we were turned, and proceeded at a rattling pace towards the scene of uproar. The mere sounds emitted from the clattering of the horses' feet upon the pavement, followed by shouts of "the Sodgers are coming," caused instant consternation and dispersion. The exception comprised some members of the softer sex ; who, with arms akimbo and clenched fists stuck upon their hips, faced and dared us to ride "over women," claiming the privilege of the petticoat to abuse us *ad libitum*.

What jeremiads and lamentations were sung upon the upsetting of the rioters at the celebrated Peterloo affair ; when the probability was, that those very beings would gladly have lent a hand to the sacking and burning of the town. I was stationed at an out-quarter at the time, but had the information from those present, that such a vast assemblage of the lower



orders, with neither character nor property to lose, was truly alarming. I was also informed by those who had something to lose, that but for the timely interference of the military, the consequences to the town might have been frightful. The horror and apprehensions of the respectable portion of the community were wound up to the highest pitch, and can scarcely be conceived. That this vast heterogeneous assemblage congregated peaceably and quietly is not denied. It was their policy to do so ; and I will not go so far as to assert that their intentions were the opposite of pacific at the outset. But that they would have dispersed and returned to their homes in an equally pacific mood, after being dosed with inflammatory harangues, is another question. Moreover, it is not likely that those who had come from remote villages would have quitted the town without visiting public houses ; and infuriated and reeking under the influence of

stimulants, excesses might have been perpetrated rivalling those subsequently committed at Bristol.

The songs sung in praise of the hussars for their forbearance, and the abuse of the yeomanry for their ferociousness, was a specimen of lying cant and hollow hypocrisy on the part of the discontented. They hated us as they hated the devil; but it suited their views at the time to laud us for leniency. I was given to understand that our fellows were mainly instrumental in the dispersion of the mob; that although they neither cut nor wounded any of them, they well welshed with the flats of their swords such as were tardy in getting out of the way.

No beings on earth are subjected like the military to the whims and caprices of their countrymen. On ordinary occasions they are looked upon as little better than wastrils, useless, and a burthen to the nation; their room more acceptable than their company. In cases of emergency and dread of civil

outrages, they are petted from the soles of their feet upwards; and all ideas of the "invasion of ancient privileges" vanish.

In 1816 or 1817, at a borough town on the Midland Circuit, and on the approach of the Assizes, it was expected as a matter of course that the military would, as customary on such occasions, move to a respectable distance from the town, and enable the majesty of the law to exercise its functions unawed by the presence of soldiers. A serious obstacle to this "ancient custom," however, interposed; which it sadly puzzled the magnate of the magisterial bench to get over: the gaol happened to be crammed with desperate characters about to be tried for frame-breaking and other outrages, and the civil authority was deemed insufficient for the preservation of the peace and prevention of outrage within the walls. Alas! for those good old times, when the staff of the constable produced so much awe and subjection! Now its talismanic influence was

a dead letter, and the hateful weapons of war were called into requisition.

A guard of dismounted men was stationed every night in the gaol. All went on smoothly till the time arrived for ridding the town of the presence of the military before their Lordships, the Judges, made their entry. And now arose a question which sorely puzzled the worshipful Bench ; and as much fuss was made about the disposal of half a hundred moustachioed blue-jackets for a few days, as if their worships had had to concert measures for the safety of the borough from foreign invasion. To dispense with the presence of the military as a gaol-guard was out of the question : to tolerate their presence in town on such a momentous occasion,—never let it be said ; publish it not in Gath ! How *was* the knotty point to be got over ? The judges, I believe, were appealed to in this dreadful emergency ; and *they*, I understood, like sensible men as they were, ruled that as the civil authorities could not do

without the presence of a military guard in the gaol, that no possible harm could result from the men remaining in the town during the assizes?

This rational view of the state of affairs did not exactly square with the notions of the sticklers for the maintenance of "ancient rights and privileges;" and the concentrated essence of worshipful wisdom was again brought to bear upon this knotty affair. Out of the smoke of the borough go we must! And where will it be imagined we were doomed to hide our diminished heads? Why, in the environs and villages immediately adjacent; which was like sending a party from the City, across London Bridge, for location in the Borough, that they may neither sniff nor pollute the atmosphere of Middlesex.

Those mourners over the departed but still cherished days of the potency of the Dogberry tribe for all civil commotions, were doomed to further vexations and innovations upon their ancient privileges,



for the last finisher of the law could not exercise *his* functions in safety without the presence of the military ; and the troop was formed under the gallows, whilst seven or eight poor wretches were launched into eternity. An appalling and horrifying spectacle it was ; for such a bungler was the operator, that from the time the halter encircled the neck of the first culprit to the like operation he performed upon the last, nearly half an hour elapsed.

## CHAPTER VI.

Embark for the Peninsula—Doings on ship-board—  
Landing and sojourn at Lisbon—Move *en route* for  
the army—Inspection by Lord Wellington—Crossing  
the Esla, and capture of the enemy—Cavalry affairs  
at Morales de Toro—Bivouacking—Battle of Vit-  
toria.

WELL, enough in all conscience has  
been said upon civil matters and home  
affairs. Proceed I now to treat on subjects  
more congenial to a military spirit, and  
founded upon more satisfactory data than  
from ransacking the memory.

At the close of 1812 six troops were  
formed for service at Manchester, attended  
with proceedings and measures similar to  
what took place in 1808. The poor fellows

of the home squadron were subjected to constant and petty annoyances, and had neither peace nor quietness till after the departure of the service troops. If one of the former happened to possess an article, whether of arms, accoutrements, or equipments, of a newer or better-looking description, the lynx eye of the embryo Peninsular soon made the discovery, and posted off at once to some one in authority, with a "Please, Sir, so-and-so has got a better sword and scabbard than I have!" or as the case might be; and no alternative remained for the other party, but to grin and submit to the exchange.

On the 16th of January, 1813, the King's hussars made their entry into Portsmouth, and the transports being all in readiness, were soon afloat, and wafted over the deep to the shores of Portugal. We entered the Tagus, landed and took up quarters at Belem on the 3rd of February.

Sea-voyages are generally dwelt upon as monotonous, and often inducing a fit of the

"blues." Such can scarcely be said of our voyage from Portsmouth to Lisbon, from the following cause.

The commissariat was being strengthened with an additional and, I believe, a new description of force, called "Conductors of Stores," who wore a blue uniform. They were dispersed among the different transports, and about twenty fell to our share, who messed with the troopers, and pigged in the hold with them. This equality and sharing in accommodation removed all pretences for assuming a higher carriage on one side, or warranting any concession from the other: hence, "Hail, fellows, all!" And a sorry time some of these half-civil, half-military heroes had of it. To "do" them out of their allowance of grog, was deemed a "perfectly legitimate measure" by the wicked ones; and *they* found cordial and willing auxiliaries and co-operators in the persons of the Jack tars.

But there were other freaks to which they were subjected not of the most agreeable

nature. Night and darkness was the auspicious hour for real fun. Each and all of the Blues, as they were called, were provided with hammocks; and when these suspenders on high and their burthens had ceased to vibrate, and all had lapsed into stillness and silence, bump upon the floor came the carcase of an embryo conductor—then another—then another. Peals of laughter rang forth, with vociferations of “There goes a blue!” “There goes another!” and so on. Most of them before the termination of the voyage, had, in order to secure rest and quietness, ceased to roost in a suspended position, and contented themselves with the softest boards afforded between decks. The force in question, it was said, formed a strange compound of human grades, from the dapper clerk and counter skipper to the powdered flunky, according as interest or influence predominated.

During our sojourn, which lasted a fortnight at Belem, the reins of discipline were



drawn to their tightest stretch, with the view of checking the propensities to drinking which the facility of obtaining new wine at a cheap rate afforded the men. Oh, what a bane, what a blot, what an accursed plague-spot is drunkenness! How many noble, how many excellent qualities does that one debasing and solitary feature cast a shadow on the character of the British soldier! It is too painful and distressing a subject to dwell upon.

On the 4th of April we began our march from Lisbon, laden like bees. Few of the uninitiated can either conceive or believe the load a horse has to carry on service, in addition to the rider, with his multifarious trappings, equipments, clothing, and accoutrements. Take a sample on the present occasion. Three days' bread, three days' meat, three days' corn, three days' hay, and three days' wine, giving an aggregate of between sixty and seventy pounds. It is not to be supposed this burthen is to be borne every day; but, when possible, never

less than two days' consumption had to be carried.

To avert evils purchased with such bitter experience in the preceding campaign in Galicia, as affecting our cattle, we were well and efficiently prepared and provided. Light and portable forges were supplied to each squadron ; and every man carried a spare set of horse-shoes, with more than a proportionate number of nails. From sheer necessity, a few of the latter may occasionally have been used ; but woe to him that disturbed the repose of the former in the valise, except from the most urgent necessity. So sacred was this reserve store considered, that I think I can, without fear of uttering an untruth, affirm that scarcely a set was called into requisition from their first deposit at Lisbon to the landing of the regiment at Dover from Boulogne. At the termination of every day's stage the sons of Vulcan were put upon their mettle, and puff went the bellows ; clink, clank, hammer

and anvil. They were sadly put to the pinch at times for fuel. I have no note of the fact in my jottings; but I believe on several occasions the troopers turned hewers of wood and burners of charcoal.

April 4. Sacavem.—5. Villa Franca and Villa Povo.—6. Azembuza.—7. Varres Semoa.—8. Returned to, and sojourned in Azembuza until the 20th; under cover, certainly, but surrounded by poverty and desolation. The sameness of this halt found relief at times in witnessing the activity and adroitness of the Portuguese peasant in chasing and running down a wild bull on the plains in the immediate vicinity of the village. Tame animals were used as a decoy to lure the wild ones from the mountains; and when one of the latter was enticed from his fastnesses, separated from his companions, and reached the plains, the game began in good earnest. There was the peasant, in his conical “tile,” short jacket, and smalls, mounted upon his prad, armed with a long wooden

pole, scouring the plain at full stretch on a small long-tailed nag, *sans* saddle, and an apology for a bridle in the shape of a piece of rope; now following the wild animal, now alongside and digging him in the flank, now in front and rapping him on the pate to alter his direction, twisting and turning the animal till fairly run down.

April 20. Again in the saddle, and made Santarem.—21. Galegoa.—22. Thomar, and a halt. All that I recollect of Thomar consists of its having a monster convent situated upon the top of a hill, with I know not how many hundred, if not thousand apartments. So said report.

May 1. Cabacoas.—2. Espinhel.—3. Louza.—4. Halt.—5. Sobreira.—6. Galicez.—7. Cea.—8. Halt.—9. Villa Cortez.—10. Barracal.—11. Freixadas, and rest.

On the 18th the hussar brigade, commanded by Colonel Grant, was reviewed in the neighbourhood of Freixadas; and all eyes were gladdened and gratified with a

sight of our great chief, hitherto known to us only by name and fame. Rumour gave it that his Lordship was not a little delighted at getting such a valuable and splendid addition to his army.

May 19. Again to horse, and reached Coris Cada.—20. Freixo de Numao.—21. Crossed the Douro by a bridge of boats, at the ferry of Pecinho, and bivouacked on the banks of the river. This was our first bivouac; and a most acceptable and glorious relief it was from the discomforts inseparable from housing in dilapidated empty houses and hovels.—22. Torre de Moncorva.—23. Halt.—24. Fornos.—25. Villa Della.—26. Tandine.—27. Barrandilanos.—28. Halt.—29. Bivouac in a valley near Carvajales. This was the first Spanish town, and held the head-quarters of Sir Thomas Graham. An officer's detachment was given to the town; and on patrolling the quiet streets, about three o'clock on the morning of the 30th, I



passed the quarters of the gallant veteran, who was just in the act of bestriding his steed. At the time I did not know Sir Thomas. He appeared to me a tall and rather round-shouldered personage, in a half-military uniform; and it required, to my thinking, an effort to throw his right leg into the saddle; but when fairly seated, off he darted up the street, and pulling up at a respectable-looking house, seemed to be engaged in rallying good-humouredly some of his staff for their sluggishness. I gathered from the groom who he was; and the man gave such an account of the extraordinary distance the General had travelled on the preceding day, as to incline me to the belief that he was drawing a "long bow." Sir Thomas was, I believe, capable of undergoing much bodily fatigue.

Midnight 30th—31st May. Assembled, and moved quietly and without noise out of our bivouac towards a ford of the river Esla—rapids, as it turned out, would I think be a more appropriate term. And

here followed a scene far more distressing than anything I ever witnessed, even to downright fighting. The river was rapid in its course, its depth fully reaching the horses' girths, and the bed so rough from stones that the animals with difficulty maintained their footing. Then, again, the operations of this midnight undertaking were aggravated in no small degree by our having more branches than one to cross, caused by islands in the middle of the river. You had just hugged yourself on reaching *terra firma* in safety, and from a sound ducking, if not something worse; then plunge again you soused into the dark and shining abyss, which the dawn of morn rendered anything but attractive in appearance.

But the perils of the cavalry fell immeasurably short of those of our gallant companions in arms—the 51st British, and Brunswick Oels. I had, in common with others, several clinging to my legs and stirrup-leathers, and carrying as many of their firelocks as I could manage in front of

me. The only dread I felt was, lest they should seize hold of the reins, the inevitable and serious consequences of which I earnestly pointed out. Both myself and excellent little steed partook more of the Lilliput than Brobdignag stamp; and the aforesaid addition to our weight possibly enabled us to grapple more effectually with the rude and ruthless torrent.

Oh! but the heart-rending, the agonizing sight of seeing some of the poor fellows who had lost their footing, and were floating down the stream supplicating help. A Brunswicker, passing in my front, seized with a death-grasp the iron bar of my horse's bitt; a desperate and only alternative was resorted to, by forcing him to quit his hold. What his subsequent fate was, I know not; but I sicken and shudder at the thought of that horrible scene. To deny succour and assistance under such melancholy circumstances to a fellow-creature, appears cruel; but what was to be done? Hesitation for another second might have

been fatal to the lives of all; for the animal gave such indications of rearing, that nothing could have saved us from being engulfed.

The right squadron, under Captains T—l and W—e, having crossed, formed and charged on the village of Almandra, which held a picket of the enemy, and succeeded in capturing about thirty men and horses. This was the maiden fleshing of our swords in this campaign, and gave a spur and incentive to further brushes.

Before crossing could just be observed in the grey of the morn, the French vidette on the hill side on the opposite bank of the river, suddenly, and as if bitten by a tarantula, ceased to be stationary, and the quickness of his movements and gyrations betokened evident alarm and surprise. After, as may be imagined, satisfying himself of the true aspect of affairs, off he bolted towards the village, the skirts of his mantle and horse-hair of his helmet floating on the breeze. The only casualties

recorded in my notes are, one troop-horse drowned, and an officer's charger, Captain W—e's, wounded.

The object of this movement was to make a lodgment on the enemy's side of the river, and cover the crossing of the remainder of the division by pontoons.

Upon this unfortunate river was afterwards often thrown the blame of being the cause of the loss of any equipments sustained by the troopers. At the inspection by the commanding-officer, preceding a day's march, a man would be asked, what "became of his canteen?" of another, where his "netts," "forage cords," or as the case might be. The invariable reply was, to the end of the chapter, "lost in crossing the Esla." "Bless me!" would the commanding-officer exclaim, "that Esla must be choked up with camp equipage." It was found requisite to inspect and have an inventory made of every article of equipment in each man's possession and a



stop thus put to further calumnies against Father "Esla."

May 31. Yniesta.—June 1. Fosno.—2. Morales de Toro ; and here some of us trod soil familiar to us, associated with recollections of the campaign of 1808.

This day, on the plains in the vicinity of Morales de Toro, the two leading regiments came up with the enemy, and made a successful dash, capturing about two hundred horsemen. Being the rear regiment on the line of march, we were precluded from participating in this brilliant affair.

To each regiment in its turn was assigned the post of honour, and the joyful countenances of the men on every third day gave a faithful index to their feelings. Independently of mere fighting, lots of the good things of the world were to be procured by being in the advance.

Sweeping over the plain at a spanking trot, we passed by a young officer of the —th, lying upon his back, quite dead,

drenched and bathed in his gore. It was a mournful spectacle to behold one so young, possibly so good, cut off at such an early stage of his military career. All our better feelings appeared to be enlisted in sympathy with so sad a fate coming singly and alone ; whereas a battle-field abounding in such scenes may be viewed without arousing similar sensations. The youthful appearance of the officer drew forth the compassionate expressions of "poor young fellow!" from the troopers who saw him. His name was C——n.

The vast plains and level ground in some of the inner provinces of Spain afford a splendid field for the operations of cavalry, where there is neither hedge nor ditch to impede their movements.

June 3. Pedroza del Rea.—4. Torre le Baton.—5. Penaflor.—6. Bivouac near St. Cecilia.—7. Villa la Bone, after passing through the respectable town of Valencia.—8. Tamara.—9. Fromista.—10. Sandine.—11. Omillas.—12. Isarre, on the heights of

which Lord Wellington displayed a considerable body of his cavalry. Two regiments of the hussar brigade were detached to the right, whilst *we* remained on the left, menacing an attack on the enemy who had thrown out their skirmishers. On our advancing, they retired into the village, which was watched by us, pending the operations on the right. From this commanding position, the Castle of Burgos became visible, which was blown up on that or the following day. Both to the right and to the left could be seen, in beautiful military array, the white tents of the different divisions of our army gleaming in the sunshine : it was a soul-stirring, sight.

June 13. Homazes.—14. Cernula.—15. Ona, and crossed the Ebro, after traversing a delightful valley along its banks. And here I feel my lack of descriptive powers ; for all or any thing I could say, would fall far, very far, short of the magnificent reality. Our entrance into the valley was by a rugged passage, partaking more of

the mountain track of mules than a regular road ; but the first burst of the valley upon our view dissipated and threw all past inconveniences into the shade. The varied productions of mother earth stood forth in gorgeous and luxuriant display ; the opposite side of the river, bounding a portion of the valley, pictured forth scenery scarcely less interesting. High rocks shooting up in every variety of form and shape : now abrupt and perpendicular, now sloping backwards, now overhanging,—all covered with rich-looking foliage taking root in the fissures ; the dark but clear stream (now low) quietly traversing and rippling over its stony bed.

June 16. Toris, near Modena.—17. Launtria.—18. Bivouac near Barbarino.—19. Subijana.—20. Halt.—21. Battle of Vittoria ; and before entering on this important affair, a little digression and a word or two about bivouacking.

We were seldom, if ever, at a loss to find a spot suitable to this kind of cantoning ;

and what we had heretofore fallen upon seemed to embrace all the pleasures of a pic-nic, superadding the alterations of change of scene and circumstance. The weather was now delightfully fine; the atmosphere clear, serene, and bright; the heat seldom oppressive, and the effects of a shower soon dissipated by the warm and genial rays of the sun.

If a cloud came over us, it arose from the absence of the Commissary,—a most important personage for the preservation of harmony and good temper in a campaign. The late appearance of this gentleman on one occasion caused culinary preparations to be made under the infliction of dire hunger, and at an hour rather too aristocratical for the plebeian insides of the troopers. Those gentlemen had doubtless an arduous, and in many instances not very agreeable duty to perform,—more particularly such as had to cater for a regiment of cavalry; and nothing short of the most untiring energy and exertion,



could shield them from obloquy, however unmerited. On one occasion our Commissary, being a few days behind his looked-for arrival, the circumstance elicited no little freedom of expressions from the troopers; indeed, they were any thing but complimentary to the absentee. On his appearance, our brigadier, in slow and measured terms, and in his usual northern accent, addressed him thus: "By the eternal G—! Mr. Commissary, I have a great mind to let the hussar brigade loose upon you." This was the *on dit* of the day, but I vouch for nothing more.

I have seen in print so many statements akin to the above, as to be inclined to the opinion, that in most cases the imagination has been largely drawn upon in order to strain out a joke at the expense of a class, whom, collectively, I have never looked upon in any other light than gentlemen.

We had for neighbours, at one bivouac, Sir Victor Alten's brigade of Light Dra-

goons ; and in one of the regiments I dropped upon a schoolfellow. We had never seen, or scarcely heard, of each other's movements since the juvenile hours of "long-taw" and "knuckle-down," and a delightful chat took place. Subsequent events in the career of each were superficially dipped into, or skimmed over. He was then a corporal, now high in rank, winning golden opinions in the East, and cutting his way to fame and fortune. Health and long life to the brave Salopian ! What happy, happy hours did those gipsy-ing days yield forth !

Having, in the rapidity of our late marches, outstripped the Commissariat, the bivouac at Subijana was more remarkable than any other I recollect, for empty insides and pinching hunger ; and without any alleviation to its gnawings, we bestrode our sheepskins on the following morn, and moved onwards. The booming of cannon was heard afar off ; and many for the last

time heard on that march the "distant and random shot." Part of our way led through by and unfrequented paths and woods, under the guidance of a Spanish peasant; but at length we halted in close column, and dismounted on the bank of the Zadore. The troop of artillery which accompanied us unlimbered in our front.

Little time had we remained quiet before our friends on the opposite side sent a feeler amongst us, in the shape of a round shot, which smashed our poor Spanish guide, who was standing in advance of the column. Presently, on came its chum, fizzing, whizzing, hissing, and cutting its way through the atmosphere, till it billeted itself plump in the midst of the column,—an ugly visitant, whose presence could well have been dispensed with. The first feat of this iron missile was to pierce the seat of the hinder part of a serjeant's saddle, passing through the valise and horse's rump; its next exploit was to hit the thigh and mortally wound a trooper named Stanley,

who, rapping out an oath, exclaimed, "I have stopped that ——." Not so, though, for it rolled against the ancle of a well-educated and fine young soldier named Courtney, whom it disabled.

I think the first shot from our side sent a wheel off one of the enemy's gun-carriages on the other side of the river spinning into the air. I well recollect the delight that lighted up the hard-visaged and rubicund countenance of Serjeant B——y, when rubbing his hands he recounted at the time the achievement of No. 1 gun.

Stanley, or as he was nicknamed "Wanker," would appear to have found nearly that description of death he had often expressed a wish for. It was his ill luck to have for his steed a rig, or perhaps it would be more properly named, ridgil, whose amorous, vicious, and mischievous propensities, were a source of eternal torment to the rider. It is a sad misfortune in the life of a soldier, if he is prevented by any cause from chumming with his

comrades. If in billet, Stanley and his unruly animal were crammed into any outhouse or hovel separate from the others, — and in the bivouac, tied to a stray tree or bush; and it was in moments of vexation, arising from the above cause, that the poor fellow would pray that the first cannon-shot might knock his —— head off.

Stanley was by birth a gipsy: of middle stature, athletic in make, and burley-looking; a good-tempered, rough-and-ready soldier,—which implies ever ready, ever willing; and although not particularly polished, still sufficient for the occasion. He was not cast in “nature’s fairest mould;” had no pretensions to an “Adonis,” in form or feature; and neither tights nor Hessians could have added nor received dignity from the nether man. But had his life been spared, he was one likely to have rendered good service in his country’s cause. His thigh underwent amputation, and death relieved him from his sufferings on that or the following day.



We next passed the Zadore by a narrow bridge, moving more towards the scene of the battle and the town. The heights on our left displayed the enemy in force ; and just after crossing the river, the boys in green jackets were nimbly spreading themselves into skirmishing order. Then a regiment in scarlet moved up, whose number I have forgotten, but whose appearance I shall ever remember. They massed from file into echelon with a precision and order that would have won applause from an Inspecting-General in the barrack square ; moved up the green-sward slope, and trod the earth with a mien and confidence that none but British soldiers can do under similar circumstances.

Our movements continued till we came in front of the town, where several brigades of cavalry had been collected ; and here we halted for a tedious and wearisome length of time, passive spectators of the battle which was raging all around us, and impatient listeners to the roars vomited forth

from the mouths of more than a hundred pieces of cannon: as also the soul-stirring cheers of the brave infantry. As regards the cavalry, this is what I imagine is called in the fashionable military phraseology of the present day, "holding in hand." Well! save all and every one, say I, from such an infliction—"holding in hand," or "held in hand." Why, if literally construed, it may imply that you were held in hand till the glorious opportunity of "letting slip" had gone by. Hang the words! I neither like nor comprehend them, and would have them expunged from the military vocabulary.

All hands acknowledge that "every bullet has its billet;" and it was no little relief to the tedium of a halt, spun out to such an unpalatable length, to watch the vagaries of those unwelcome visitors, and remark upon the spot each chose for its terminus; some more close than agreeable. A fine young hussar, about three file from me, had his brains spattered upon his adjoining comrades.

At length a real stir was observed amongst the hitherto almost inert masses of cavalry, accompanied by an order for the advance of the hussar brigade. I may be right or I may be wrong, but the impression at the time was as follows for its disposition namely :—One regiment to pass around the right of the town ; one to pierce the centre ; one to move by the left. The latter fell to our lot ; in the carrying out of which we had to grapple with unexpected and unlooked-for difficulties in crossing the nasty ugly ditches with which the meadows were intersected. The order of march was every now and then reversed, and made apparent disorder. We did not imitate the never-varying example of the fleecy race, of following their leader, but as the head of each squadron was checked by any obstacle, out shot those in the rear, right and left, with a view to select the best spot for crossing ; and in this manner we scrambled over the meadows, now scattered, then brought together to the proper compactness for the order of march.

We were close upon our game, and when formed into line bounded into the stubble-field ; first riding down a body of infantry, who surrendered ; then pushing on to a collision with cavalry, who were quickly routed and driven from the field. At the close of the *mêlée* I discovered a trooper in the rear, his body bent to an angle of 45, performing with apparent *practical* effect "sword exercise against infantry." This conduct looked so un-English towards a fallen foe who was supposed to have surrendered, that I brought the circumstance to the notice of the Captain. I was wrong in my premises, and ought to have made the amends—possibly I did. Reid cleared himself satisfactorily, and his explanation, which was corroborated by others, was, that some of the rascals we had ridden over, or passed, raised themselves to a sitting position, and popped away at us *au derrière*.

The superior speed of my little nag placed me alongside of a cavalry officer who

had nearly reached the boundary of the field. We adjusted our little matters of antagonism quickly and quietly ; not certainly as gentlemen generally do, for we dispensed with the presence of doctor, seconds, pistols or bullets ; he surrendered to me. Our foes had now rallied and menaced the offensive in compact array. I therefore gave my assistance to the formation of my troop, after handing my Captain to the keeping of a trooper named P—s. Little Ben was a good soldier, but a wet soul ; and I afterwards understood he made something handsome out of his prisoner.

We did not wait to receive our opponents ; and being let slip from our leashes, went full tilt at them, clearing a second time the stubble from intruders. Large masses showed in our front ; and in the absence of expected support, pursuit beyond the precincts of the field was not warrantable.

I was fortunate enough to make a second capture of an officer, but of a different



plumage from the first, who was plainly caparisoned, his head-gear or brass-mounted helmet ornamented with horse-hair. My second prisoner was a magnificently dressed officer of our own kidney, young and handsome, whiskers and moustachios in an embryo state, but be-furred and be-silvered from head to heel. He had reached the boundary of the field, fenced by a broad dry ditch, with rising ground on the other side. His horse had failed in the first attempt to ascend the slope, and before he had time to make another trial I was alongside of him in the ditch, and personally introduced myself to his notice; he handed me his sword. A helmeted chasseur, who had cleared the fence and was removed from harm's way, on looking back and seeing his officer a prisoner, returned and surrendered himself to a trooper standing by, (Walmsley, or some such name, not belonging to the same troop as myself,) mourning bitterly the fate of his "*cher Capitaine*." To the eyes of some this may appear an act of

praiseworthy self-devotion to his officer ; but I much question if the great Napoleon would not have received it in a different light. He would, perhaps, have considered that there were other and paramount duties upon a fighting man, than evincing so much regard for a captive officer as to volunteer to share his captivity.

Returning from the pursuit with such a glorious prize, I no doubt entertained a highly exalted opinion of my prowess, and looked forward to applause on surrendering my trophy. Alas ! uncertain are the hopes of man ! my visions of expected laudation were soon doomed to vanish. Every bugle was put in requisition to blast forth the rally, accompanied by shouts of "Form ! form ! form !" from scores of throats ; nor was this without reason, for our situation had become one of peril, from the approach again of our inveterate foe in compact order. Hurling away his sword, I gave my prisoner his liberty, and attended my troop. Throughout the field all was hurry and

bustle in restoring order ; but before half of the regiment, I should think, had dropped into their places, a simultaneous rush forward was made *à la Cosaque*—less noisy, possibly—by all, both the formed and the scattered. It was said at the time that our brave Brigadier shouted forth, “ For G—d’s sake let the hussars loose ! ” Be it as it may, loose they were let, and thrice the stubble-field was cleared ; and support soon came by the arrival on the ground of some squadrons of the —th Hussars.

This determined, terrific, and final rush was made by men wincing under lacerated feelings, arising not only from the annoying attacks of the foe, but from having to let loose the numerous prisoners captured at the first brush ; and every sword was clutched, every arm raised with a resolution to conquer or die. During the heat of pursuit, a number of us were converging towards an outlet in the field by which the enemy were retreating, when shouts came from behind of “ Cut him down ! ” “ Cut him down ! ”

and on looking around, a huge horseman in a grenadier dress was making his way headlong through us at the top of his horse's speed, parrying with his powerful arm the chops made at him. That he might with ease have been minced not a doubt exists, but I believe he escaped; and I don't think I am singular in saying, I did not regret the circumstance. Surrender he would not; and it would have been a pity to see the noble fellow lose that life he so bravely strove to preserve. His long-tailed black horse of sixteen or seventeen hands high, his own immense stature, huge and powerful frame, topped by a high bearskin and black fur cap, gave him a most Goliath-like and formidable appearance.

It is a common and no less true remark that the French soldiers are very rapid in rallying after dispersion,—one minute scattered about, the next, a compact body prepared for the onslaught.

The impression and opinions on this day's battle at the time, were that, if

support had come up in proper time, several thousands of prisoners, infantry as well as cavalry, would have been secured ; instead of which all escaped, and a glorious, golden, and magnificent result was lost. The regiment had their hands sufficiently employed in taking care of themselves. Whatever may have been the opinion of the higher powers regarding this day's fight, the men certainly looked for some distinctive expression or mark of their country's approbation. Nothing short of downright English bull-dog courage saved the regiment from destruction, unless, indeed, they had turned tail. Unlikely that—very !

My notes of the regimental casualties give ten men killed and two officers, and forty-three men wounded ; four horses killed, sixteen wounded, and twenty-one missing.



## CHAPTER VII.

Sojourn at Olite—March to arrest the march of Soult—  
Battle of the Pyrenees—Investment and surrender of  
Pampeluna—Bull-fights at Artagona—Quarters on  
the river Arga.

MOVING forward, we fell in with an immense quantity of baggage gathered together in a field by the road-side; and placing a guard over it, we continued our march, and bivouacked in a wood about five leagues' distance from the town.

Plunder to an incredible extent was made on this day, and no secret made of displaying it. I managed, while the regiment was preparing a guard for the enemy's baggage, to procure a havresack of biscuits,

which I shared with my pet steed, and gratified, to a satisfying extent, the cravings of nature, which had gone on increasing, and without alleviation, since the hungry bivouac at Subijana.

Although none of the precious metals fell to my share on that day, I gained something far more substantial and gratifying to my feelings as a soldier—the marked thanks and approbation of Captain B—h for my attention to the troop which I had never quitted. I soon ceased to be under the immediate surveillance of the gallant officer; but I have no reason to believe he ever lost sight of me, or that I ever forfeited his good opinion, being given to understand by a third party, that, on a particular occasion, he generously and unsolicited interested himself in my behalf. This was several days subsequently to Vittoria's fight; the "particular occasion" it is foreign to the purpose of these "Jottings" to introduce.

A few days afterwards my name appeared

in the orderly book, as appointed acting-sergeant-major to the regiment, and I mounted an additional *chevron*. This unexpected jump was not a little flattering to my self-conceit, and more than could be looked for by so young a soldier, over the heads of so many more experienced and deserving non-commissioned officers. However *that* was not my business. My ever-watchful friend — now brigade-major — reiterated his former admonitions, adding emphatically, “that I was now in the direct path for—”

June 22. Bivouac near Salvatiene.—23. Aquillar.—24. Halt.—25. Villa del Carte.—26. Barasoen.—27. Olite.—28. Carcastillo.—29. Halt.—30. Return to Olite, Beyre, and Pitillas, and rested.

From Thomar, in Portugal, until now, our cattle had mainly subsisted upon the green and unripe forage of the countries of Portugal and Spain, such as barley, rye, and oats ; and if none of these were come-at-able, wheat, many a waving acre of which fell

beneath the operation of the cavalry-man's sickle.

This well-timing of the advance of the army showed a wise foresight on the part of our great chief, and proved his consummate skill in providing against contingencies, by making that description of provender available for the wants of his cavalry before it was gathered into the granaries. *That* arm would have been a sad drag upon the rapidity of his Lordship's movements in the absence of such provision.

It may with propriety be asked, if the proprietors of the soil were compensated for the devastation and ravages perpetrated by the horse-soldiers' reaping-hooks? Indeed they were; and here shone forth, in enviable distinction from other powers, the honour and integrity of the British nation in fulfilling pecuniary obligations of this nature. Pity that the people of the country were insensible to that high-toned characteristic of Great Britain, and suffered

themselves to be gulled into the belief that the *bons* given by the commissariat were little better than so much waste paper, so that they sacrificed them for cash, at an enormous discount, to travelling speculators who were no ways scrupulous or doubtful of either the capability or intentions of John Bull. This was the *on dit* of the day, and I do not think it wide of the mark.

Grapes were now ripening, and the face of the country presented a rich aspect, teeming with this beautiful fruit. A fresh-plucked bunch, with the bloom on it, formed, with a slice of wheaten bread, a delicious repast. The wicked one called it receiving the —.

Those who have never seen a vineyard, form a very erroneous notion of the manner in which the cultivation of this delicious fruit is carried on in a regular vine country, and imagine that the trellised and ornamental training in England holds good elsewhere. I can give no better comparison



at a first sight, than that they resemble good-sized gooseberry-bushes set in rows at regular intervals.

Rest of nearly a month enabled the regiment to make good, to a beneficial extent, the wear and tear inseparable from a long and continued march. In addition to the sons of Vulcan, whose labours were diurnal now, the entire host of artizans which the regiment could muster, such as saddlers, shoemakers, and tailors, were pressed into stitching operation.

Sickness, to some extent, fell upon us during this rest; and as the cause could scarcely be supposed to originate from either the climate or the locality,—the former being delightfully fine and salubrious, and the latter open and dry,—the effects must be sought elsewhere: possibly from the grapes, or the juice therefrom may have contributed a fair share; for the latter was as common as *aqua pura*, and as easily to be procured. I was an invalid for about ten days, and this was my first

absence from active duty since I received the King's coin, and swore allegiance in 1806.

It is a problem essentially for the faculty to solve, but it is a positive fact, that so soon as a regiment settles quietly down in its quarters from a long march, sickness (to an extent that no previous external indication can account for,) shows itself. An ordinary observer of these results would arrive at the conclusion, that a state of activity, excitement, and even fatigue, are antidotes to disease.

July 27. Again in the saddle, and made a long march of upwards of twelve leagues, reaching Olaz, and rested in position opposite the enemy's left until the 31st. Our post distanced about three leagues from Pampeluna, and faced the entrance into the Pass of Roncesvalles. This sudden and unexpected march from Olite was caused by an effort of the Duke of Dalmatia to carry into practical effect his threatened theory—"to force a passage through the

Pyrenees, and chase the British army beyond Vittoria." The ground was quite inoperative for cavalry; our services, therefore, little else than a sinecure, for we had little to do beyond watching the desperate struggles of our brave infantry, who for three days successfully arrested and gloriously resisted the fierce and repeated attempts of the enemy to pierce the mountains.

July 31. Eleano and Sarazette; one day's march, followed by ten days' rest.

August 11. Retired to Salina de Pamplona and Espaza.—12. Artagona, and a month's repose. While here we were on one or two occasions amused with the spectacle called or rather miscalled a bullfight. It afforded excellent sport, being stripped of those bloody and disgusting scenes which characterise similar exhibitions in the large town.

The arena selected for the sport was an open space, a square, in the middle of the town, the avenues or streets leading to

which were barricaded and paled up. A bull was turned in, whose calm and peaceable deportment gave no indications of being "upon deeds of mischief bent." This serenity of temper was not however permitted long to exist, for half a dozen tormentors (unarmed Picadores) commenced an attack by flapping their mantles in his face, poking him on the ribs and other parts of his body. The mercury of the animal's temperament at length began to ascend; and the pith and marrow of the amusement took place, pending its gradual transition from zero to the boiling point. When he became furious, and danger was apprehended, he was removed, and replaced by a fresh one.

The Dons displayed no little activity and adroitness in shifting and evading the attacks of the bull when his mettle was up; and notwithstanding the pokes of the belligerent to divert his attention, the bull pursued his victim to the barricades, which the latter failed in some instances to ascend

and clear without receiving a rent in his smalls *au derrière*.

September 15. Marched, and occupied Saraga, Berbinzana and Miranda del Arga, villages situated near the Arga, for we formed a portion of the force employed in the investment of Pamplona, which surrendered on the 31st of October, and thus gave liberty to the hussars to pursue their march.

In the market-place at Pamplona, all the cattle cashiered and pronounced unfit for further service was disposed of by public auction. The "George Robins" in this case was enacted by our farrier-major. Our hammer man may be said to have *filled* the post conferred upon him capitally. To call him a "light dragoon" would be a misnomer, for he could have personated the fat knight *sans* pillows or blankets. He was a being also of "infinite fun and jest," and drew forth peals of laughter from the Dons in his efforts to discourse most eloquently



and effectually upon the favourable points of the animals, but with such a blending of Spanish and English that few could comprehend him. Nevertheless our "Robins" showed no lack of a sufficiency of arithmetical knowledge to squeeze out of his auditors a respectable heap of mint-sauce for the service of the public chest.

Jolly, jovial, rollicking, tippling, devil-me-care P—r! Long hast thou been food for the worms!

P—'s peccadilloes were constantly getting him into scrapes; and although "*toujours* farrier-major," the honorary distinctions attached to the post were ever varying and ringing the changes between sergeant, corporal, and private—private, corporal, and sergeant. But with all this, as a curer of that curse and bane to a cavalry soldier on service, "sore backs," he shone forth unrivalled; and it redounded not a little to his credit, that his services were often put in requisition by the other regiments in the

brigade. More than this need not, I think, be expected from any of the most talented in pharmacy sent forth from the Veterinary College.

November 1. An onward movement, cantoning at Ibero and adjacents.—2. Oskoz, Equillor, Jourbe, Ylarqui, and Bevasain.—7, 8. Auza and Elzabura.—9. Villages in the vale of Donna Maria.—12. San Estevan and Sumbilla. Half a league here terminated our approach towards France, through the pass of Maylo; and now certain drawbacks upon the pleasures of campaigning began to be developed. Heretofore all was *colour de rose*, now dark spots began to make their appearance; and had a debit and credit ledger account been kept, the preponderating balance in favour of the “sunny side” must have been subjected to a daily diminution. Constant and heavy rains, mountainous and abominable roads; and worse than all, stint for man and horse.

The supper meal was looked for with a longing anxiety. The vale of Donna Maria abounded in excellent chesnuts, and the feeding time would see us all—civil and military, male and female—*en famille*, squatting around the cheerful hearth fire, watching with eager optics and impatient jaws the slowly revolving machine, similar to a coffee roaster, in its rotatory motion. Out at length were tumbled the contents of the iron barrel, and the onslaught began; each combatant armed with a wooden hammer cracked and munched away, notwithstanding the singeing of fingers or chops.

The hussar brigade now received orders to retire and take up cantonments on the river Arga. Accordingly on the 19th November, we retired to Anza and adjacents.—20. Buena and ditto.—21. Halt.—22. Occupied Asain, Ibero, Lete, Aldaba, and Ochovi; in the first named village were the regimental head-quarters.

The instruction given to the *fourriers*, or providers of quarters, by such as had the privilege, generally ended with the expressed wish of getting, if possible, billeted upon a priest. However, as all the applicants were not likely to obtain such an enviable *maison*, and a holy father for a host, those whose wishes were accomplished considered themselves lucky. At Asain I had that good fortune; but my venerable landlord, living in an unostentatious style and appearance, I imagine saved him from a guest of a higher order. Mine host was an aged and venerable Padre, sinking fast into the "sere and yellow leaf," but fully alive to the good things of the world. Himself and housekeeper, myself and groom, comprised the living portion of the household establishment. So especial a favourite did I become, so much did I ingratiate myself in the good old father's friendship, that whenever his solitary spread displayed a delicacy or a tit-bit more than ordinary, I generally

received an invite; and many a good fat capon did the pair of us discuss.

The *cuisine* completed, and all in readiness for the attack, the patience of my stomach when keen, was put to the test; for before the holy father was prepared for the onslaught, certain preliminary measures had to be taken, which with a well-whetted appetite found no favour. The worthy Padre required his corporeal substance to be encased in drapery; and there was his fussy old housekeeper pinning here—poking, tucking and trussing-in there—in order to shield the outer garments, from chin to knees, from the effects of either dribble or splashing.

At the close of a dish of chat, carried on, certainly with a very imperfect understanding to either of us, the good old man would fix his eyes earnestly and intently upon me, and in a subdued querulous tone mutter something to himself. I believe it to have been expressions of



sympathy for me that, notwithstanding all my amiable properties in assisting to drive the invaders from his soil, my heretical opinions would debar me from any other resting place than —. Afterwards, when in France, I received a friendly epistle from my host, which he managed to forward me by some one subsequently passing through the village, and I regret having lost the missive.

There are times and seasons, even in campaigning, where a little harmless levity and departure from the rigour of discipline may be indulged in without any serious injury to the service; in other words, “it’s a sorry heart that never rejoices.” While quartered at Asain, a select few of the small deer of the staff met for the above purpose; and the *denouement* was in danger of being attended with unpleasant, if not fatal consequences. Of topics for discussion, plenty were at hand red hot from the anvil; and the generous juice circulated freely. My

capability for "deep potations" was not of the first order ; and I believe I was, in consequence, the first that dropped from his perch.

How long I had remained oblivious of all that was going on around me I know not, I only remember being awoke by the acting-adjutant standing over and shaking me violently by the collar. He stated that a drowsiness came over him of a singular nature, and producing a feeling quite at variance with the usual sensations previous to sleep ; that he became alarmed, managed with difficulty to reach the window, and dashing open the shutters found instant relief. As the weather was chilly, considerations for the comfort of the outer as well as the inner man had not been lost sight of, and a cheerful pan of charcoal graced the centre of the apartment, whose deleterious effects had begun to operate when they were fortunately arrested by the foregoing precaution ; otherwise we might have

been discovered, when daylight made its appearance, lying like “warriors taking our rest;” but, oh shame! with bottles and glasses around us.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Movement into France—Out-post duty in the Pyrenees—Opening of the campaign in 1814—Advance with the army—Cross the Gavès, de Mouline, de Oleron, and de Pau—Skirmishes on the main road—Battle of Orthez—Cross the Adour, and affair in the town of Grenade—Further skirmishes—Cross the Garonne—Battle of Toulouse—End of the campaign.

Now came the overjoying intelligence of a movement into France, — “La Belle France.” What delightful anticipations were indulged in by us!

Accordingly, on the 15th December we again bestrode the sheepskins and made Licomberre.—16. Tolosa, following in the track of a portion of the army which had preceded us. On the archway over the

gate of entrance into Tolosa, were the marks of cannon-shot ; one also had pierced a hole in the gate close to the lock, or bolt, and this was described as a new mode of picking locks, invented by Sir Th—s G—m.—December 17. Oyarzen, &c. ; and on the 18th, we crossed the Bidassoa, entered France, and quartered at Ascain. Of the original bridge over the Bidassoa, nothing was standing save the remnants of the arches ; boats were therefore laid down for our passage.

Near Ascain, on the banks of the Nivelle, stood the enemy's entrenched camp, to the eye in almost undamaged perfection, comprising breast-works, redoubts, and huts, most ingeniously constructed. Our gallant opponents were quite *au fait* at this species of architecture.

December 19. Sourade and La Ressor, straggling villages upon the banks of the Nive.—Halted 20th and 21st.—22. Crossed the Nive at Cambo, and cantoned in Bas, or Lower Cambo. Unmistakeable traces of



the tug of war were left at Cambo in the remains of abattis, breast-works, and other checks to an advancing foe. The villages and farm-houses we had hitherto passed in France bore sad and melancholy proofs of the ravages of war.

The consummate wisdom of our great chief now shone forth conspicuously, in calculating upon the probable effects that waging war on an enemy's, instead of a friendly soil, might produce upon the minds of the soldiery; and he foresaw that what had heretofore been regarded as sacred and inviolable, would now be outraged with impunity;—hence his stringent orders to the Allied Army. Coincident with the invasion of the French territory, his Lordship's intentions were made known in terms neither to be misunderstood, nor disregarded with impunity. The severity with which plundering and marauding would be visited, (and all concerned knew the firmness of their man too well to neglect due attention to his wise

and prudential admonitions) was dictated no less by a noble generosity and sympathy towards the unoffending inhabitants of the soil, than a regard for the comforts of the soldier.

The orders promulgated to the army purported that "the Allied Army were at war with Napoleon Buonaparte and the soldiers of France, and not with the peasantry." What an enviable, what a humane and lofty position to assume! and every way characteristic of a great and generous mind, who, by thus ameliorating the rigours of war, gained both the esteem and good wishes of the people! But what inestimable advantages were secured to the army when these intentions on the part of our chief became fully known and believed! Instead of the eye resting upon desolate and deserted villages, and late happy homes,—the inhabitants flying from the plague and pestilence of war,—the ordinary avocations, domestic or otherwise, went on undisturbed; and if the soldier

had a penny to lay out, he could get his pennyworth for it.

Notwithstanding the punishment held up to view against marauding, some were found reckless enough to test the sincerity of our chief's denunciations; and bitterly did they rue and pay the penalty of their disobedience. More than one delinquent we passed, when on the line of march, dangling to the limb of a tree by the road-side, as a terrible warning to all evil doers.

On the 23rd, a melancholy death befel a hussar named Barber. Proceeding with a mounted foraging party along the bank of the river, which had swollen to a level with the road, he incautiously turned his horse's head in the direction of the stream, when the animal, losing his footing, plunged in, and man and horse were swept away by the ruthless and turbid torrent.

January 9, 1814. Our regiment moved in advance, and took up the out-post duty, establishing its head-quarters at Oucouray,

the approaches and narrow roads to which had become, by the late heavy rains, difficult to travel through; the animals plunging every now and then in mud-pools and holes up to their girths. This was a country of mountain, hill, and vale; and although its scenery, combined with the richness of its valleys, might have rendered it a desirable summer locality, at this season it was villainous, and a six weeks' trial produced a hearty sickening of the Lower Pyrenees. Men and cattle in common fared scantily, our chief dependance for supplies resting with the Commissariat, who had to convey them from the magazine of Passages and St. Jean de Luz. These issues were uncertain, and could seldom be depended upon, from the difficulties of execrable roads and paths which the mules encountered.

For about a fortnight, the fertile valleys of Macay and Mendionde supplied us with excellent hay. These resources now became completely exhausted, and ceased to supply

a bent ; and as our limits were bounded by a line of demarcation tacitly submitted to by the belligerents, a substitute for the said herbage was sought for and found out, and the green and young tops and sprouts of gorse, gathered in abundance in the neighbourhood, formed an essential and invaluable substitute for provender for our cattle for about a month. The process of gathering, chopping, and bruising, (for the two latter of which tools were provided) imposed no little toil upon the hussar ; but the task was cheerfully submitted to, and he was amply compensated for his labour, by the preservation of his horse in service condition, if not from almost starvation. The gorse, after being minced and bruised, was mixed with the yellow corn,—that is, when we could get the latter to blend with it.

The dreary and wearisome state of existence to which we were now subjected in this execrable village, Oucouray, was occasionally relieved by an enlivener, in the



shape of a turn-out in marching order on a foraging excursion; but we seldom effected much good, and instead of gathering wool, at times got fleeced ourselves. Our vigilant opponents in front generally scented us out; and, being infantry, had all the local advantage for a fight on their side in this mountainous district.

During one of these foraging parties, myself and troop-sergeant-major Chettle and a file of men, detached ourselves from the main body, struck into a fresh path, leading to an elevated spot covered with wood. After completing the ascent, we were lucky enough to drop upon a *maison rustique*, in which was abundance of the precious herbage.

Nets were handed to Monsieur to fill; and after planting our videttes, whose view was much circumscribed by tree and bush, I and Chettle posted ourselves, mounted opposite a large square entrance into the building, urging expedition on the part of

the host, an inward monitor whispering that our present situation was ticklish and uncertain. And verily so it turned out; for scarcely had the host finished the bagging of our game, when our ears were saluted by unharmonious sounds, and pop, pop—whiz, whiz—pat, pat, came two leaden messengers, and effected a lodgment in the door-post a few inches from our *head-quarters*.

Unmusical as these sounds were to us, they appeared to have an opposite effect upon Monsieur, who, although gesticulating in an imploring manner to consult our safety in flight, could not disguise a lurking grin of satisfaction which played about his mouth. As he however seemed desirous of getting rid of us empty-handed, and detaining our game-bags, we replied with grins of a less fascinating appearance, backed by the exhibition of a brace of bull-dogs, followed up, I make no doubt, with volleys of *sacrés*.

Our netts were handed to us, and away we scampered ; and just as we had reached the bottom of the ravine, the regiment was threading its way in file homewards, forage cords and netts *in statu quo*. Mightily did we plume ourselves on our success ; and while waiting to drop in the rear, were constantly assailed with—"Where the d—l did you get that?"

On another occasion, I accompanied a relieved out-post picket under Captain P—in search of hay. We took a direction towards the front, moving along a road leading to a village which may be said to have stood on neutral ground, being occupied by the enemy during a part of the day, and abandoned by them during the night. We dropped a roomful of the herbage at a farm-house standing in a wood on the left of the road, and a few hundred yards short of the village. At a short distance, a range of hills ran out from the right of the road, and on rounding the base of the hill,

you came directly upon the said village. As a measure of precaution and security, I moved on with two file of men, cautiously feeling my way, and, as I imagined, thoroughly exploring the village. Not a soul was to be seen, civil or military; and a death-like silence reigned in the streets. One of the men said he saw an old woman at an attic window, making ominous signs with her hands; I saw her not. Two videttes were placed on the hill overlooking the village, and commanding a range of all the approaches from the enemy's side. The picket then bagged their game, and we jogged homewards.

At a short distance we met Captain W—e at the head of his troop, and on a similar errand; who, fired with emulation at such a glorious and valuable prize, came to the determination of trying his success also. I tendered my services, and they were accepted. The troopers were sent to the forage-loft, whilst I accompanied the Captain

and a file of men to station them as videttes on the spot occupied by the preceding ones. Just before completing the ascent, the tops of the caps of a detachment of infantry rose up in sight ; and there we were, *vis-à-vis*, and almost nose to nose, with our mortal foes !

We retrograded at once, but very deliberately ; for the gallant Captain insisted that no precipitate flight or apparent alarm should be shown. Bad indeed must have been the marksmen that could not with ease have emptied four saddles' occupants ; and I can only account for our being allowed to make our descent, by supposing the enemy to be as much staggered as ourselves by so unlooked-for an introduction into each other's presence. I fancy, that whilst we were jogging down on one side of the hill, they were toddling down on the other. We had just finished the descent, and crossed the main road in the direction of the farm, when a division



of cavalry came banging and clattering down upon us ; and now the sport began in good earnest. The infantry had re-ascended the hill and were blazing away at us also, whilst the cavalry kept popping with their carbines from the road. No rush was made upon us, no attempt at collision ; they kept at a respectable distance, bearing in mind, I suppose, that “ the better part of valour, is discretion.”

I do not think our gallant foes showed much keenness for sport on that day, or they certainly might, by closing a little upon us, have indulged in a nice little *battue*. Capital game, too : the wood so effectually sheltered us that we were only pelted with branches or slips of bark from the trees, which flew about in all directions. The only casualty sustained by us was the abandonment to the enemy of Lieutenant B—t’s mule laden with forage. All the efforts of the *bât* man to lead the animal out of the hubbub were in vain. Poor

Thompson ! I can almost picture before me the grief and despondency depicted upon his countenance whilst tugging and pulling at the obstinate brute. It was all in vain,—not an inch would he budge. Back doors have been found a mighty convenient outlet in moments of peril ; and so we found it in a path that led from the farm in the direction of our quarters without coming upon the main road.

From the short time that intervened between the withdrawal of the videttes and the attempt to post those of the troop, looking also to the range of country their position commanded, it strikes me forcibly that the enemy were lying *perdue* all the time. It is rather a lucky circumstance that there was no inducement or occasion to enter the village in numbers, as was doubtless expected. It further shows, that in dealing with a wide awake and vigilant foe, too much caution and circumspection cannot be exercised, to avert

disaster. In this case, the ordinary precautions were not neglected; still danger hovered near us. Casualties will arise, in fact, are inseparable from a state of warfare; but when loss ensues from negligence or lack of the observance of common rules of prudence, the odium strikes deep.

Whenever I visited the stable, which I often did for the purpose of caressing my little steed, she would lay her head upon my shoulder to receive the customary scratching and rubbing. But on these occasions I seldom went empty-handed—something was carried, either in shape of herbage or dry food, to curry favour. These little kindnesses and marks of attachment I had frequently to forego in this pinch-gutted quarter; and at times I could almost fancy by her looks that she reproached me for cruel neglect.

Stung with the self-reproach on finding an empty manger one morning, as also nothing certain in prospective, myself and

man saddled and mounted with netts and cords, determined to make a rigid search for provender within the cantonments of the regiment, and as much without them as prudent regard for personal security would warrant. House after house was visited by us and closely searched;—every nook, corner, and cranny pryed into, likely or not likely to contain a prize. Retiring from one dwelling, with my patience almost exhausted, and despairing of success, we passed by a large-sized cask resting vertically upon its skid. I rapped it on the bilge with my knuckles, but instead of eliciting symptoms of hollowness, a more pleasing indication of substance was produced. I looked my suspicions at Madame, who darted forward with alacrity, pulled out the spigot or stopper, and pointed triumphantly to the nothingness that followed. Still sceptical, I thrust my finger up the aperture, which met a resistance that caused an immediate attack upon the

vessel, and we found our reward in as much hay as we could carry. Were we not envied by all aware of the treasure we had discovered? Faith were we!

With what inexpressible delight was the joyful and acceptable intelligence by us received for removal from this miserable quarter, and with what bounding hearts (ay, and light insides to boot) did we, on the 14th of February, year of our Lord 1814, march to Hasparre, a snug and respectable-looking little town, rejoicing in the possession of plenty of the good things of this world, but at prices beyond the reach of any exchequer at low-water mark.

I found plenty of hay in my billet, but no straw; and whilst our grooms were attending to their stable duties, myself and Sergeant W—t—n handled our forage cords, and proceeded in search of the latter. After going a short distance into the country we found abundance of straw, and were civilly permitted to assist ourselves to it *ad libitum*. As much as we could stagger



under was therefore brought away ; and I had the supreme delight of witnessing my prad roll her carcase, and revel and luxuriate on a soft and ample bed.

W—t—n beat me hollow in the art of legerdemain or sleight of hand. How he managed it I know not, but manage it he did, to insert unseen into *his* pack a monster loaf of white bread, of a round make, top and bottom crusts convex and flat ; twelve inches I should say in diameter, and half as many through the centre. This was revealed to my astonished eyes on our return.

Some German hussars quitted the town on our entering it, and I imagine it had been their quarters. I really envied the well-fed, sleek, and clean appearance of man and horse, particularly the latter. The Germans have ever sustained the reputation of taking great care of their cattle, to which I willingly subscribe ; but I do not go the length of some writers in according to them such a vast super-excellence over the

English dragoon. That the German was not unmindful of his own little comforts, one horseman was able to bear testimony, by the ample supply of culinary vessels dangling about him.

The opinion I am about to enumerate is purely and solely my own, and if wrong I alone am accountable for it; but, for the life of me, I could not help thinking that the force in question were permitted a *little* more latitude than we were ourselves in the matters of "*meum* and *tuum*;" that their peccadilloes on that score, if not openly sanctioned, were winked at; that what would be denounced as plunder if done by us would be ascribed in their case as a little harmless liberty allowable on campaigning. The foregoing allusions apply solely to the feeding department; and a rush for the fellow, say I, that would not plunder for his horse where all fair means had failed.

February 15. The scattered farm-houses in the vicinity of Hasparre, with a dawn-

ing of better times for man and horse.—  
16. Oraque, a cold, comfortless, and miserable bivouac.—17 and 18. Charite, and farms in the vicinity, widely scattered.—  
19 and 20. Arençon.—21 and 22. Ilhare and Camer.—23. Hanterville, Oseraine, and Esperette, villages on the left bank of the Gave de Mouline.—24. Crossed the Gave de Mouline in company with the 3rd division, making a demonstration to attack the enemy, who occupied the town of Sauveterre in force, still holding by outposts the left bank of the Gave de Oleron, running close to the town; but they retired on our approach, and destroyed the bridge. An attempt was made by the infantry to cross the river, but was unsuccessful, from the opposing force being too numerous. At dusk, we retired to former quarters.

We were now for the first time acting in concert with the fighting 3rd division and its indomitable commander. Pending the issue of this day's work, the baggage and non-

combatants had remained in cantonments ; and a rumour was rife that the active provost-marshal of the division in question detected some of the tender sex of the hussar brigade violating the path of honesty towards the inhabitants, and that he had, *proh pudor !* inflicted or threatened to inflict punishment by flagellation upon a nameless part !

Now I do not vouch for the truth of this ; but that the functionary alluded to had done something to awaken the choler of the hussars, was made manifest by the manner in which he was assailed when passing us on the line of march. Epithets anything but complimentary met his ears ; but he always failed in detecting the assailants—sharp as he would at times turn round his head and look daggers—all were silent !

There was an impression amongst the hussars—I should be sceptical, however, as to its truth—that Sir Thomas Picton had a thorough and rooted dislike to cavalry,

more especially hussars. That he could discourse in a tone neither particularly sweet nor agreeable, I had an opportunity of both seeing and hearing.

Pushing the enemy along the main road, we stretched rather beyond the bounds prudence warranted, and were suddenly brought to a pull-up by bullets plentiful as blackberries flying about our ears. The sooner we could escape from such an unwholesome atmosphere the better we imagined, especially as our assailants were in an inclosure which prevented our acting on the offensive. We therefore retired, and had just finished our retrograde movement, when up galloped Sir Thomas Picton, harking on his Caçadores, and dispersing them throughout the inclosures on either side of the road. He addressed our leader in a rather sharp tone, and asked "What the cavalry were retiring for?" The required explanation was given, which ended on the part of our leader, in blandly and good-humouredly stating that "we would



not desert the infantry," or words of the like import. Then came the growl discourteous—"The infantry can take care of themselves, Sir." Oh that nasty word, Sir! Whether the gallant recipient felt really stung or not I cannot say; but he turned to a brother officer, and said smiling, "What an —!"

Indeed, brave Sir Thomas, you were never more in error in your life, if you imagined you were addressing one who would flinch from danger! Come in whatever shape it might, our leader was the first to be in it, and the last out!

February 25. We forded the Gave de Oleron opposite Sauveterre, and were quartered at farmhouses near Sallais. Glorious feeding now for all descriptions of insides. The enemy's videttes remained on the left bank of the Gave till their personal security was put in peril. Skirmishers were thrown out to cover our advance. A chasseur posted under a tree, on the left bank of the river, stuck to his post (to use

a vulgarism) "like a brick," with his carbine at the advance, after all the rest had retired, with a view, it would appear, to put our magnanimity to the test. Finding, at length, that our approach was sufficiently close to be agreeable, he coolly brought his piece to the level, let fly, wheeled about, and bolted into the river, followed by the curses of some, and laughter from others, at his impudence and bad return for our forbearance.

Very easy would it have been to knock him off his perch; but then, to shoot sitting! *that would* have been unsportsman-like. Never let it be named. For my part, I don't believe the vidette's intention was to hit, and the crack was merely giving us a parting salute *pro forma*.

There happened to be one of the skirmishers, an excellent soldier, whose forefinger exhibited restless and impatient signs to come in contact with the trigger of his carbine; and I could not check this itching propensity without uttering a threat, and

also making him sensible, that by firing, he would be guilty of a cowardly act, that if the shot told, the feat would be little less than a deliberate murder.

February 26. Forded the Gave de Pau, and took up cantonments near Ramur. The advanced guard under Captain W—e skirmished several hours this day, driving in the enemy. Private Faulkner was killed, and several men wounded.

February 27. A general action, in which the enemy were defeated and driven from their position, on the left of the road, and about a league or so from Orthes. The hussar brigade were closed up to the infantry, but not made use of till the end of the day, when the —th made a brilliant and successful dash. Here was the “holding in hand” system enacted to a mortifying and unendurable extent. There were our brave companions,—à *piéd* sweating blood and water,—covering themselves with glory, and their enemies with dismay; whilst we were doing—what?—why offici-

ating as mere seconds, or bottle-holders. They were permitted to gorge themselves to repletion with renown,—we were not gratified with even a nibble. This was too bad. These were but my own impressions ; I may be altogether wrong.

About the pith and marrow of the battle, a squadron of regiment was called for, and at once wheeled by threes towards the required point, but had not stretched out many paces when a countermand was received ; and oh ! how the gallant soldiers and leader felt chafed at this. Much, very much indeed am I mistaken, if the regiment did not, from the above cause, miss adding another leaf to its laurels.

During the fight, a group was observed assembling around an object at no great distance, which attracted notice. Lord George Lennox gave the information, that his brother, the Earl of March, was severely wounded.

Whilst the infantry were driving the

enemy over the hills, we pressed along the main road, in order, I suppose, to cut off their retreat; but from not being allowed to put salt upon their tails at an early stage of the battle, our object failed. Passing and rounding an undulating part, the enemy were unfolded to full view in flight, scattered in the fields like sheep, and the broad and main road a perfect jam a few hundred yards off. Sir Dennis Pack came up to the angle of the road, which led to a descent, and was evidently vexed and disappointed at not having artillery, which might have made fearful havoc amongst those wedged in the road.

On our way, an unfortunate French artilleryman was lying in the middle of the road, and in danger of being ridden over; both his legs were shot, and only maintained their hold by mere shreds of skin, or ligaments. Our humane commanding officer, Major G—th, directed a couple of hussars



to dismount and remove the poor fellow to the road-side, and thus free him from an aggravation to his misfortune by being trampled to death. Our casualties were trifling ; a few men and horses wounded. Quartered on the line of road leading from Orthes to Sauterpisse.

February 28. Moved along the *grand chemin*, and put up in the neighbourhood of St. Sever.—March 1. Forded the Adour opposite St. Sever, the bridge being destroyed. This day the regiment took up the post of honour, and skirmished in pursuit till the enemy were driven into the town of Grenade. Sir Stapleton Cotton now came up to the head of the regiment, and gave orders for clearing the town, but not to carry operations beyond it. Captain T—l had charge of the advance guard, of which two divisions were formed for the attack, one of them as a support. I attached myself to the leading one, and the town was approached at a brisk trot.

The position of affairs in the interior was hidden from our view; and having obtained permission, I spurred on, took a peep round the corner, returned and reported. What a sight did I witness! Our leader admonished the division to preserve its compactness,—no one, at his peril, to break the ranks, or get before *him*. On we sped; and after sweeping an angle right forward, at the entrance to the town found ourselves placed face to face to our quarry formed in line across the market-place. On nearing them, a waving, undulating sort of unsteadiness seemed to pervade them from flank to flank. Steeds were pressing forward into an extended stretch out, sword handles clutched tighter, hurrahs followed; and, ere Greek closed upon Greek, it was “wheel-about and turn-about,” and off they went, to the tune of “the devil take the hindmost,” fixing the price of heels at a premium, and hands at a discount. Little mischief was done, beyond the cap-

ture of about a score of men and horses. The street and road that debouched from the town was for a short time quite choked up, and pursuit beyond the immediate precincts was forbidden; indeed, such a procedure would hardly have been safe, for our knowing opponents were generally provided with an antidote for the disease which now afflicted them, in the shape of an ambuscade.

It is not a very gracious task to talk too much about oneself; but as I shall confine myself to facts, I see no use in being squeamish.

The overthrown, in their flight, kept whirling their long swords all around their carcases, to parry off the hackings made at them, as also making cuts to their rear; and it must have been, I fancy, from one of the latter that my reins were severed on the near side when in the marrow of the *mélée*. For a few seconds, and until I had gathered the ends of the reins that were

dangling down, I was powerless, for either attack or defence ; and had the pursued been less eager to get out of the way, my further military prowess might have received a *quietus*. One runaway only seemed aware of my perilous state, and, on passing, made a rear lunge at my head, and the extremity of his sword just nicked the rim of my chako and peak.

There were circumstances attending this small brush, of rather a novel nature. The arena chosen for the fight was the centre of an open space of ground in a good sized town, in broad daylight, in presence of and under the very noses of hundreds of spectators who lined the windows of the surrounding houses ; and it is matter of no little surprise, that the *sabreurs* of so gallant a nation, with so many anxious and fair countenances beaming upon them, should not rather have hailed such a glorious opportunity for displaying their valour, than have shunned or flinched from

the encounter. Shame on ye all, ye poltroons! there was no danger of your being abandoned, in the event of accidents, and left to your own resources on the gory plain, your wounds festering from a chilly atmosphere, your parched tongue suffering for want of moisture, or your precious fluid running to waste for want of a styptic. Here were ministering angels upon the spot to avert all those calamities. Perish the fellow, say I, that would not, with such a curative process at hand, the loveliest portion of God's creatures for solace under his sufferings, have pitched to the winds all dread of doctors, diachylum, lint, tow, and the whole contents of the medicine chest, ay, have rather courted than shunned a scratch, a gash, or a copious tapping of his claret! Blunted indeed must have been your memories, not to have borne in mind, that "none but the brave deserve the fair!"

Halted at Grenade, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of March; and on the 5th moved to Arblada



le Bas, and other inconsiderable villages on the heights above St. Germe. Rested four days, and on the 10th removed to Caumont, about a league off. Halted four days, and on the 15th retired to the vicinity of Arblada le Bas. Nearly the whole of this day we were at the alarm-post near St. Germe, expecting to be attacked, as the enemy had driven in our pickets on the preceding day, and pushed their advanced posts to St. Germe. This day the regiment was increased to four squadrons, by the joining of one from England, and a new commanding-officer.

March 16. Captain H——'s squadron attacked, and drove back the outposts of the enemy, capturing twenty-two men and fourteen horses. The officers and men engaged in this affair received the thanks of Sir Stapleton Cotton, promulgated in his General Cavalry Orders.—17. Caumont.—18. Plaisance, chasing the enemy two miles beyond it.—19. Chateau de Sauveterre and vicinity.—20. Passed through Rabastenes,

a few miles in front of which the enemy made a stand in position, from which they were driven by the Light and sixth divisions; we were kept in reserve, and not employed. Quartered near Tarbes.—21. Burapau.—22. Boulogne. Magnificent quarters, and sumptuously entertained.—23. Le Isle en Doudon.—24. St. Thomas, &c.—25. Head-quarters at a chateau between St. Lys and Plaisance.

March 26. Advance-guard under Captain W—e; who skirmished with and pushed the enemy through Tourneville. Our gallant leader was all fire, energy, and eagerness for action, which ended in disappointment. The chase was kept up for about a mile beyond the village, and we were evidently gaining ground, when, ~~within about~~ sixty or seventy yards of a bridge which the pursued had crossed, was discovered, just in time to save us from disaster, the cap-tops of infantry, who had crouched under the abutments of the bridge. A staff-officer in scarlet, named (if I mistake not) L—ht,

volunteering a participation in the chase, and looked-for brush, was the first who called out, "W—e! an ambuscade!" Such was the fact, and no mistake; for on our pulling up, the enemy rose up in numbers to their proper altitude, and peppered away at us. Throwing out skirmishers, the division retired quietly. Casualties: our leader's charger shot—a man and horse wounded. Retired to Plaisance, leaving a guard to hold Tourneville. In the afternoon, the enemy, cavalry and infantry, advanced in force upon the town, and obliged us to abandon the post. In this skirmish, a sergeant was killed, an officer and several men and horses wounded.

Often have I heard a fierce wordy contest upon the comparative bodily fatigue endured by the horse and foot-soldier on service; and wisely is it ordered that each should stick to and be satisfied with his condition. The opinion of the latter rests upon not only the fatigue and trouble undergone in catering for and taking care of the horse,

but the multiplicity of trappings and appointments to be taken care of and kept in a state of cleanliness. The *sabreur* subscribes to all this as far as mere labour goes, but stoutly maintains that after a twenty or thirty mile ride, his physical capabilities are not in the slightest degree either weakened or damaged; and that after encountering and overcoming all the category of troubles advanced on the other side, he is as fresh as a lark compared to the wearied traveller *à pied* after accomplishing a like number of miles.

I happened to be in the same billet at Plaisance with an intelligent sergeant of a light infantry regiment, of about the same build as myself (King Johnnish); and not for curiosity sake alone, so much as from a desire of putting the matter to the test, did I cover the outer man in scarlet, superadding all the other appurtenances and munitions of war, not forgetting to shoulder brown or shining Bess. I positively affirm that judging from my feelings at the

moment, a ten-mile march would have given me a settler. Whatever store I had previously set upon my steed, was doubled after this.

March 27. One wing of the regiment *en avant* along the main road leading from Plaisance to Toulouse, accompanied by the light division. One wing made a flank movement, under Colonel D—e, upon St. Simon, held by the enemy, both cavalry and infantry. They gave way upon our approach ; but, discovering the nature of our force, sent their sharp-shooters into the enclosures, who held us in check.

An officer who accompanied Colonel D—e suggested that a skirmishing party should be sent into a vineyard by the road-side, and clear it of the enemy. I proceeded with a few files of hussars for that purpose ; but had scarcely made an entry, when the horses sank up to their haunches in the moist and fresh turned-up mould. This and the leafless stumps of vine trees, set in regular rows, offered such impediments,



that we should have found ourselves of little more service than as becoming targets for the amusement of the enemy's sharpshooters. At the close of the day retired and quartered at Plaisance.

March 28. Moved into St. Simon, a perfect paradise of a village, interspersed with beautiful gardens and vineyards, and dotted with handsome villas elegantly furnished; and last though not least, cellars well stocked with the choicest wines, but in most instances *sans le maître de la maison*. This charming spot was understood to be the chosen Elysian retreat of the rich *bourgeois* of Toulouse, but the season not sufficiently advanced for occupation.

April 3. Bundled out of our snug and comfortable quarters at midnight, and moved four leagues down the left bank of the Garonne to the village of Grenade.

April 4. Passed the Garonne at 2 P.M. over a pontoon bridge, preceded by the 3rd, 4th, and 6th divisions, Lord Wellington superintending. The river was much

swollen, wide, and the stream rapid. Seventeen boats were planted for the passage over. After crossing, moved up the light bank of the river, and established head-quarters at Guineau.—8. Finulete, half a league onwards.—10. Battle of Toulouse, which began early and finished at dusk, the enemy retiring into Toulouse after a desperate and ineffectual struggle to hold his formidable position and chain of redoubts, which latter had for hours been belching forth, from their engines of destruction, flames, smoke, and shot.

At this bloody, fierce, and final contention we were mere lookers-on, closed up, ready and panting to be let loose in aid of our brave brethren in arms. I must confess that the detestable “holding in hand” system seemed to be warranted on this occasion,—that is, according to the notions of the day *then* entertained as to the fitting occasion for the employment of cavalry. On all occasions are the services of the foot-soldier available in his country’s cause.

Neither local or other impediments are suffered to check his onward career. Whether hill or plain, mountain or ravine, the formidable redoubt or "imminent deadly breach"—all, all are surmounted and overcome. Not so with the horseman, who although fully identifying himself both in feelings and inclination with his brave brethren, *his* operations and sphere of usefulness are limited.

Crossing a valley early in the action, we were pitched into by a rather severe cannonade from a redoubt, and four horses were killed. Put up, after the fight, at St. Jean.—11. La Pin.—12. Bessières. This day the French quitted Toulouse, followed by the allied army.—13. Santa, &c. Here we got the intelligence that Buonaparte had abdicated in favour of Louis XVIII.—15 and 16. Montastrue, Garridest, Gemel, and St. Salpice, villages on the Alby road, meeting with a hearty and hospitable reception from the inhabitants, who mounted the white

cockade, and "Viva Louis Dix-huit!" pealed forth from every throat.

March 17. Puylaurens. An unexpected and long day's march, owing, as reported, to Marshal Soult's persisting in carrying on hostilities. Outpost duty and all other "pomp and circumstance of war" was resumed and continued until the 19th, when a cessation of arms was officially notified as having been agreed upon by Marshals Soult and Suchet on the part of the French.

Acts of friendship, kindness, and hospitality were showered upon us by the inhabitants; and if their sincerity may be relied upon, they were exasperated in no slight degree at the rumoured obstinacy of the French Marshals.

I much question if the Buonaparte mania prevailed to any great extent in this quarter amongst civilians. That he was worshipped and idolized by the military is not to be wondered at; and although they were constantly placed by him in a position

likely to receive broken heads, there were generally capital plasters in store; and when reward is made commensurate with risk and bravery, what can a soldier possibly require or desire more?

April 20. Escapon, Montcalerie, &c.—  
21. Montastrue, Gemel, and Puilhac.—22. Bazus, Villares, Vacquies, Bouloc, and Gargas; latter place head-quarters. And these villages constituted our settled cantonments till the note of preparation, for “England, home, and beauty.”

Pending the suspension of hostilities, the following line of demarcation was agreed upon by the belligerents,—the Dukes of Dalmatia and Albufera on one part, and the Marquis of Wellington on the other:—

“The limits of the department of the Haute Garonne, with the departments of Arriege, Aude, and Tarn, shall be the line of demarcation between the armies, as far as the town of Buzet, on the river Tarn. The line will then follow the course of the Tarn to its junction with the Garonne;



making a circuit, however, on the left bank of the Tarn, opposite Montauban, the distance of three-quarters of a league from the bridge of Montauban. From the mouth of the river Irun, the line of demarcation will follow the right bank of the Garonne as far as the limits of the departments of the Lot and Garonne with the department of La Gironde. It will then pass by Reole, Sauveterre, and Razuan, to the Dordogne, and will follow the right bank of that river and of the Garonne to the sea."

## CHAPTER IX.

Preparations for and march through France—Embark at Boulogne, and land at Dover—Reduction of the regiment to peace establishment—Removal to Ireland—Doings at Cappaquin—Removal to Cork, and embark for Belgium.

WARRIORS' rests, and more than warriors' comforts, surrounded us here, as regarded good living, good quarters, wine, hosts, and hostesses, and an absence from all useless and unnecessary drills and parades. But idleness was not encouraged; for plenty of employment was found in repairing the ravages committed by war.

At the quarter occupied by myself and groom, I first saw a dish of friccased.

*grenouilles* ; and tempting and tit-bit-ish as they looked to the eye, I could not overcome my English repugnance to them. So perfectly was their reality disguised, that they might without detection have passed for the legs of either pigeons, or chickens ; and, unless their taste belied their appearance, they must have possessed an excellent flavour. While taking the benefit of the kitchen fire one rather chilly morning, Monsieur and his *femme* were making their *déjeuner* off the dish in question. In entered my man, with an appetite sharpened, and keen as a razor, from exercising our horses. B—n's eyes glistened with delight at the savoury and tempting-looking dish, and he at once began, in a coaxing and wheedling manner, to fish for an invite, thus : “ Pigu, Madame ; Pigu, Monsieur.” Assent was nodded, without understanding any thing that he required, except a wish on his part to partake ; and down he sat.

I fancy I must have been in rather a mischievous humour at the time, for just as

the tit-bit had ascended parallel to his extended jaws, I enquired of him if he knew what he was about to eat? He replied, "Pigeons, or chickens." "They are frogs," says I. And, mercy upon us! what a change came over that countenance, which a second before had beamed with such delight. Now, nought but indignation and disappointment appeared; and, looking daggers at the astonished couple, he asked if they meant to poison him; and calling them in round English terms, French frog-eating ——, he bounced out of the kitchen.

Every preparation symptomatic of a long march was now being made. All the cattle unfit for further service, were condemned and disposed of; dismounted men, baggage, and other useless encumbrances were sent to Bordeaux; and when it became known that we were to march through the heart of France, all were frantic with joy.

The cavalry alone were selected for this especial honour, and for this purpose were

divided into two columns, comprising seven brigades. The right column was placed under Major-General Fane, the left under Major-General Vandeleur, and the Hussar brigade under Lord Edward Somerset, who had assumed the command subsequent to the battle of Vittoria, was attached to the first column, and took the lead on the line of march.

The first route for the hussars embraced a period of thirty days, namely from the 2nd of June to the 1st of July, including six halts; and on the 1st of June the regiment closed up to the other two regiments occupying the villages of Perpignan and Grisoles, on the main road. On the 2nd of June the march was performed, in order of brigade, to Montauban, a town of some note on the river Tarne; and on the 1st of July, the first route terminated at Mante, on the Seine. Except the three latter days, the entire march was made upon the main Paris road, level, spacious, and for a great length lined on either side with tall and



umbrageous trees. To enumerate every town we passed through, would prove dry and uninteresting.

Such a march as this never sure did a British army make before,—never did the British soldier appear to greater advantage,—never did he stand in a more pre-eminent or proud attitude: moving through the very heart of the country of our late enemy, now a conquered country; received with kindness and hospitably entertained by an enlightened and polished people; his obligations, of whatever nature, faithfully and honestly discharged; no grinding or oppressive military exactions; and last, though not least, his high bearing and independent deportment dwelt upon in honourable contrast with the petty tyranny exercised by some of the native soldiery. After this, do not envy that Englishman who is not proud of his country.

Our route led through the city of Orleans; and on a marble pedestal in a square stands erected a sad and disgraceful memento of a

barbarous age,—a sculptured figure of Jeanne d'Arc.

July 3. Moved under a new route, which carried us to Boulogne, where we arrived on the 11th. On the 16th, embarked on board the Royal Sovereign transport for merry England; made Dover roads same day, and anchored. 17. Disembarked and proceeded at once to Canterbury, where the regiment concentrated. On the 31st July, marched to Hounslow; and on the 8th of August the regiment was put upon the peace establishment, by a sweeping reduction from twelve troops to eight.

Amongst the variety of changes, transferrings, and discharges consequent upon carrying out the above measure, I was not entirely overlooked. A Quarter-Master was placed upon the retired allowance, and him I succeeded in the performance of the functions of that post; but under a new title and with diminished dignity, or if you please respectability,—Troop Sergeant-Major. Here I struck out of the *grand*

*chemin*,—the much coveted, much yearned-after path. Truly indeed is it said, that “there is a tide in the affairs of men, which if taken at its flood leads on,” &c. However, as I have ever been an eschewer of whimpering, whining, or grumbling, I do not intend to commence at this late hour of the day; still it is rather a hard task to keep the flesh from quivering after the application of the pincers.

What were the instructions of the higher powers with regard to carrying into effect this reduction, I am not prepared to say; I can only characterize its effects, as anything but advantageous to the fighting condition of the regiment. Numbers of the tough, hardy soldiers, with bronzed countenances, and in the prime and vigour of manhood and lustiness, were sent to the right about, in order to the retention of a set of embryo moustachioed heroes raked from the manufacturing towns during the Peninsular tour of the service troops, to fill up to an increased war establishment from

ten troops to twelve. Well had expectations been realised in seeing these beardless heroes become formidable warriors in appearance ; there could be no great objections to such a procedure. But what did the fact turn out to be ? Why, lots of them remained stunted pigmies, and never moved a hair's breadth upwards since first placed under the standard. There were three or four in my troop in the Netherlands—capital little fellows, sober, smart, clean, obedient, and plucky withal, I make no doubt, but then their physical capabilities ! Why a trio of them would scarcely have been a nibble for a cuirassier ; and each of them might almost have been popped out of sight in so many Life Guardsmen jack-boots. When the regiment was inspected in the meadows of Schendlebeke, in the Netherlands, Sir C. Grant made some bitter and cutting remarks upon the number of pasty faces and downy chins which fell under his observation when passing in front of the rear rank.

It strikes me that the gentry composing the recruiting parties were mainly to be blamed for these results; and that their cupidity overstepped their zeal for the appearance of their regiment.

Surmises were naturally set afloat, on seeing so many able-bodied men and thoroughly-formed soldiers let loose upon the wide world—houseless, homeless, almost penniless—and which ended in the impression that a miserable, unjust, and beggarly system of economy was the aim, the end, the root of all; and rather than maintain the regiment in an able and efficient order, the further services of such as were likely to reap a paltry pittance to themselves, either in the shape of extra pay or pension, by serving a few more years, were dispensed with, and their places filled up by the unfledged.

Assuming the correctness of what I have stated, I will not believe that the illustrious Premier then at the head of the army would



willingly have lent his sanction to such a measure. I have no wish to paint the —— worse than he really is ; neither can I, for the life of me, withhold from him what I consider is his due ; but I cannot divest myself of the feeling that in this business an unwise economy was exhibited.

Several years after, when at Hounslow barracks, I was called upon by the hussar mentioned as the one to whom a French horseman voluntarily surrendered at the battle of Vittoria ; and with what delight did the poor fellow, then clad in a smock frock, call to my recollection the affair in the ditch with the hussar officer. From his appearance then, I would have become guarantee for his paying a mounted enemy two hundred per cent for every whack the latter could bestow.

On the 11th of August, and I believe for the first time since it was raised, the regiment began its movement for Ireland ; disembarked at Dublin on the 10th Septem-

ber; and on the 19th, the troop I belonged to settled down at Cappaquin; headquarters, Clonmel. Here we calculated upon reposing in quiet, and restoring to order and condition the wear and tear inseparable from the chequered and knock-about existence of the last two years. A praiseworthy feeling pervaded all the troops to excel each other, particularly regarding the appearance and condition of the cattle; and the Cappaquin troop had to contend with a severe damper and drawback upon their exertions in the presence of two civil functionaries, a magistrate and a constable.

The neighbourhood had for a length of time been kept in terror and subjected to the nightly depredations of a lawless set of beings, "Caravats" or "Shanavests," or some such *sobriquet*, and not a morning was ushered in without some reported predatory acts on the preceding night. Amongst the catalogue of offences and crimes, the following shone conspicuous—

threatening notices, plundering of arms, houghing of cattle, and riding horses to death. So much secrecy and system had hitherto existed in committing these depredations, that the just retribution of offended laws had been evaded, and crime increased with the impunity which it found.

To put an end to or in a measure check this state of affairs, we were the appointed instrument at the command of the aforesaid civil authorities ; and we had scarcely nestled down in our new locality, when in right earnest began the home campaign. Several times a-week a requisition was forwarded to the barracks for a non-commissioned officer and ten or twelve men ; the starting hour, ten at night, and the return little short of the like hour on the following morning. The continuance and endurance of this vexatious and harassing life was becoming intolerable ; the more so as these midnight winter excursions

sions were exercising a visible and telling effect upon the good appearance of our cattle, and neutralising, to a provoking extent, all the attention and labour bestowed by good feeding and good grooming.

This harassing and empty warfare went on for some time without any good results, or any captures being made, or evils checked ; so much so, that the busy tongue of rumour began to wag at the expense of the active magistrate and his no less active *Fidus Achates*, Fitz—e. Opinions not only became rife, but were blurted out, that all this display of zeal on the part of the functionaries in question was not warranted by the occasion, but was resorted to for the purpose of gaining an enviable notoriety for vigilance and activity.

As regarded us, remonstrances were made without the slightest effect in the shape of relief ; and as an ultimatum, a correspondence was opened with the Castle from head-quarters of the regiment, but with as

little success ; obedience to the mandate of the civil power was decreed to be imperative, and we were doomed to grin and bear it.

A time at length arrived, when the exertions of the energetic magistrate, seconded by the untiring and intelligent aid, Fitz—e, were duly and properly appreciated. Two gentlemen, named O'D—r and B—g, the latter a schoolmaster travelling on a car through the mountain-pass leading from the village of Newcastle to Cappaquin, were beset at noon-day by several armed men, removed some distance from the road, and plundered. At this time, a private servant of Captain D—s was returning from Clonmel, mounted on his master's charger ; he was desired by the robbers to pull up, but he spurred on, and was fired at, but without effect.

On reaching the barrack and giving the alarm, the troop turned out and scoured both mountain and ravine, but without getting on the trail of the robbers. The road through these mountains was dismal



and solitary, not a habitation was visible for miles, and numerous localities on the line and vicinity were well calculated for the perpetration of deeds of villany without fear of detection. In my monthly journeys for cash to Clonmel, I generally pushed through the pass at a smart pace, pistol in hand.

The ever vigilant Fitz—e, however, ferreted out a clue to the robbers of Messrs. O'D— and B—g; and a party was given on a dismal, wet, and snowy night, in the depth of winter, which I accompanied, upon the assurance of Fitz—e that his scent was a safe and sure one. After passing through the mountains, the detachment dismounted and remained stationary, whilst Fitz—e, myself, and two file of hussars on foot proceeded to make domiciliary visits to the scattered huts and cabins, in which were pictured forth squalor, filth, wretchedness, poverty, and misery, in their most horrifying and aggravated forms, disgusting and heart-rending features.

The search went on for some time, the

well-known voice of our conductor, who spoke fluently the county dialect, gaining in most instances quick admission. A better looking habitation was now laid siege to, and a greater delay occurred in getting an entrance than happened in the other instances. A light being obtained, the first object that appeared, was a young and rather interesting looking female, sitting up in her bed, with a countenance strongly depicting terror and affright; the imprint of a bed-fellow was manifest, but to the queries of Fitz—e she accounted in some way or other for the absence of her husband. On our looking beneath the bed, a crock or pail of clean water was brought forth, and a white substance, about the size of an egg, was discovered lying at the bottom. This was fished up, unfolded, and proved to be a white cambric neckerchief, having a name in full length, and affording damning proof of its belonging to one of the plundered gentlemen.

We were informed that the only other

inmate was the aged and sick father, lying on a straw-bed on the floor, and boarded around in the corner of another apartment. We proceeded to overhaul the old gentleman; and whilst putting several questions to him, to which no satisfactory reply was obtained, there was observed just peering above the surface of the straw, a few human toes more than are generally accorded to a biped. Up the old man was roused, and simultaneously, and from under him, up sprang a powerful, tall, and athletic young fellow, in perfect nakedness, who with gnashing teeth, clenched fists, and eyes glaring with rage, menaced a tiger's spring at us, which was speedily checked by placing a brace of cocked pistols within an inch of his head.

Here was discovered one unmistakeable link in the chain, and this led to another. Having got upon the true scent, we followed on in the trail, and next proceeded to search a house on the skirts of the village of Newcastle; and after an inqui-

sitorial overhauling of every thing living, our search was directed to the inanimate. Nooks and corners were carefully pryed into; and amongst a heap of clothes, of all descriptions, deposited in a large chest, was forked up a pair of "shorts," the schoolmaster's veritable unmentionables, having his name on the waistband ! These were borne off in triumph, but whether accompanied by a living capture I quite forget. Here finished our midnight cruise, and we wended homewards.

Shortly after this, another capture was made of the most notorious desperado in that quarter, and the supposed leader in all the villanous outrages nightly perpetrated, and for whose caption the nightly parties had mostly been required. By constantly shifting his place of rest, as was supposed, he had hitherto eluded all search by night. A new order of attack was therefore resolved upon, upon getting good information of his whereabouts, and this was to drop upon him at daylight, when he might be sup-

posed to be slumbering after a midnight's predatory excursion. An officer and twenty men, guided by the "Vidocq" of Cappaquin, moved off at an early hour, and after many miles' travel, came in sight of the desperado's castle. Before, however, reaching it, he got wind of the approach of the military, and in sight of the detachment, bolted from his kennel with his gun across his shoulders, and made for a bog in the immediate vicinity. Here he was safe enough from being followed on horseback, but not from being surrounded, and he surrendered at discretion.

What was the subsequent fate of these villains I never learned, but I should imagine they paid a just penalty, not only for the terror they caused to the well disposed, but for the numerous crimes they had, or caused to be, committed.

Napoleon had just now escaped from Elba. And now again the note of war was sounded. We had therefore other fish to fry than pursuing these lawless *shanavests*.



We were ordered to Cork, there to prepare for flood and field adventures.

Independent of the services rendered by us in aid of the civil power, in matters purely civil, there was another power ambitious of enlisting our services—the excise, represented in the village by a guager, whose patronymic has escaped my memory, further than that a monster “O” flourished at the commencement of it. This personage, mighty in his own estimation, when under the inspiration of the “creature” (which was often the case,) was in the habit of threatening to “make a call upon us” for still-hunting purposes, and at length made good his often-promised threat.

Now Mr. “O” something had gained a much greater notoriety for his indulgence in potations of whisky-toddy, than for his vigilance or activity in the discharge of his Revenue duties, which latter were of a very questionable shape; and as I much doubted the actual requirement of our services for the occasion, I accompanied the detach-

ment for the sake of satisfying all concerned on that point, as well as to prevent future annoying applications, or being subjected to the beck and call of every underling who fancied himself at liberty to swell out his importance by parading a military detachment at his heels. All turned out as was predicted, and after being dragged for miles over the country, up one lane and down another, we found a mare's nest. The sting of the guager ever after became innocuous.

It was while we were quartered in the Emerald Isle, that a regimental order was issued directing that all of our rank should be saluted in like manner as officers. This distinguishing compliment to us was not, however, of long duration, and was put down, I believe, by an order from the higher powers. To command respect, the more respectable the recipient of a new honor is made the more likely is the attainment of the object aimed at ; and although

the excellent intention of the commanding officer cannot for a moment be either disputed or doubted, this new feature of paying respect to a certain class, which had hitherto been exclusively monopolized by the commissioned officer, was not likely to remain long in operation, from the fact of its being purely and solely a regiment affair, and at variance with the general usage of the army.

Taking a view of the measure in the abstract, and upon principle, I venture an opinion that by its general adoption the interests of the service would rather be benefited than otherwise ; but then to make it palatable as well as effective, you must begin at the other end, and exalt the class becoming entitled to new honours. Ah ! but then there must be additional expense to an already impoverished people, and the bare mention of such a procedure, would rouse to his legs some fiery senator, who would pump his lungs by the hour in

deprecating a measure fraught with so much expense to an already over-burdened, over-taxed nation.

Leather pantaloons were an excellent and comfortable casing for the nether limbs of a dragoon in his equestrian exercises ; they also possessed other, and in effect opposite, properties—they showed off to advantage the well-proportioned leg and thigh, as also exhibited in their almost naked deformity, the spindle shanks, bow legs, or knock knees. With all these preponderating advantages, the buckskin tights failed in verifying the old adage, “there is nothing like leather ;” for after allowing all credit for their ornamental features as an article of dress, they failed entirely when their useful properties were tested in the field. In the Gallicia campaign, they reposed in their folds undisturbed at the bottom of the valise ; during the Peninsular War, they formed a portion of the useless incumbrances which a regiment gets rid of when

going to fight, and were deposited in charge of the dépôt squadron.

As a substitute for leather, and by way of change with the overalls, blue cloth pantaloons decorated with cotton lace was adapted as an article of dress suitable with the Hessian boots then in use. My rank sported silver lace as a decoration of the former, and the latter was bound with the like material, with a bullion tassel dangling in front of each tibia; and when strolling down Cappaquin, in full fig, in this dress, my self-consequence must have felt not a little flattered at the respectful "Morrow maygor" (the sergeant was always sunk in small communities) with which I was saluted.

And now I bid good bye to Cappaquin, not forgetting kind hearted Mary Brennan, who gloried in vending the best flavoured Cork "creature" in the village, and who as a brewer of toddy stood unrivalled. Many a nice tit-bit of fried salmon, fresh from the



pure Blackwater, has that good soul cooked and sent me as a present to the barracks, with the most pointed directions to the bare-legged abigail carrier to be sure to call the "Maygor's notice to the beautiful strakes of curd" that fringed the interstices of the flakes, as affording irrefragable proofs of freshness.

## CHAPTER X.

Land, move forward, and take up quarters—Cavalry display at Schendlebeke—Battle of Waterloo, and advance upon Paris—Investment and surrender of Cambray—Sojourn upon the Seine—Removal into Normandy, and sojourn—Embark at Calais for Dover.

THE regiment concentrated at Clonmel in April, and six troops were formed for service. Moved on the 3rd, and reached Cork on the 5th May. Embarked at Cove on the 9th, and detained by contrary winds till the 13th; when, at about 8 A.M., weighed anchor and sailed with a favourable breeze. 17. Entered the harbour of Ostend about 8 P.M. 18. Disembarked, and moved to Bruges. 19. Village of Waerschoot, &c.; head-quarters, Ecloo. 20. Passing

through Ghent, cantoned at Sleydinge five days. 26. Saint Maria and adjacent villages; the regiment widely dispersed, in order to ensure the requisite supplies for man and horse.

On the 29th May, a magnificent display of cavalry and artillery, for the inspection of the Commander-in-Chief, took place in a large meadow near the village of Schendlebeke. Seven brigades of cavalry, consisting of twenty-one regiments in all, and five troops of artillery, all under the Earl of Uxbridge, made up this gorgeous military spectacle. Here we were gladdened by the presence of a former noble leader, but under a new title, Earl of Uxbridge. Lively, playful, and frolicksome as the most juvenile of his cornets, he whiled away the tedium of standing inactive in column for a tiresome length of time by practising his officers in taking up and prolonging an alignment, fixing a couple as a base, and starting off the others pell mell, helter skelter, to complete the chain.

June 16. Scarcely had peep of day dawned, when we were aroused from our roosts by sound of bugle, and without having time to say even good bye to our Belgic hosts and hostesses we were moved off; and the march unceasingly continued till midnight. We then bivouacked on the side of the main road, about two miles in front of Nivelles, and not far from the advance post of the enemy.

17th. Remained in position till the afternoon, and then retired followed by swarms of the enemy's cavalry, the rain descending upon us in sheets. Whilst in position as above, my troop being in advance on the main road, and at a short distance from Quatre Bras, I visited that celebrated and late scene of carnage, and unmistakable proofs were not wanting of the strife that had taken place not many hours gone by. Dead and mutilated carcases of horses, remnants of cloth of various colours, fractions of cuirasses and other munitions of war, strewed the ground. Some two or

more miles in front could be observed enormous masses of the enemy, who claimed a nearer acquaintance with some of the British cavalry before the close of the day. Save all regiments of cavalry, say I, from such a miserable bivouac as we were doomed to endure on the night of the 17th, bordering on the hamlet of Mont St. Jean ; a field of green standing corn, deluged with rain throughout the night, the ground a perfect puddle of mud !

June 18. The ever memorable Battle of Waterloo, in which our regiment suffered severely in officers, men, and horses. My participation in this glorious fight was but trifling, having quitted the field before the roar, the din, and the clashing of arms had arrived at their acme. In the long march of the 16th, we had outstripped our supplies ; and as provisioning an army is not the least important of its objects, myself and the rest of my ilk were sent to seek food.

In the glorious Peninsular campaign, my



sphere of action was anything but limited or confined ; now it was quite the reverse ; and shut out from the exercise of an act of volition, as guardian of the troop's exchequer, registrar of the men's accounts, purveyor of necessaries, &c. I fancy casualties touching my class were guarded against by being employed as stated ; otherwise why we were on that day ranked amongst the non-combatants I am at a loss to guess. For my own part, I saw no reason for our not being allowed to run the chances, share the fate of our betters, and exchange knocks with the enemy.

I must not be understood as being desirous of underrating the responsibilities of the situation of Troop Sergeant-Major, or insensible to the great advantage the service would derive from having the post filled by persons of intelligence and of the strictest probity, *mais chacun à son gout*. In the retreat of the 17th, the enemy made a capture of some of the baggage of the English army ; and as three or four

days had elapsed without hearing of or seeing the troops bâttman and animal, serious apprehensions began to be entertained for their safety. Every additional hour of absence was felt as a severe aggravation to the attack of the "blues" I was labouring under at the serious loss consequent upon their capture. In the first place there were the men's accounts and troop-books. Then, again, there were several scores of gold ducats fresh from the mint, which, in the hurry of being bundled out on the morning of the 16th, I had left behind instead of securing them, as it was my duty to do, in my belts. Nice little fellows those said ducats! and mighty serviceable on many occasions in campaigning. Then last, though not least, there was my "Peninsular Jottings."

On the third or fourth day after the fight, and when the troop got into billet, I took a stroll to look out for the lost sheep, desponding in mind, and almost with tears in my

eyes, when I saw a mounted hussar approach, leading a baggage animal which I soon recognised to be my bătman, and called for shortness "long Robinson." Here was balsam for a diseased mind ; and I do not believe I allowed him to get into his billet till I had dived into the contents of my leather portmanteau. All was safe,—the nest of goldfinches snug where I had left them. Sure-going, steady-going, softly-going, slow-coach Robinson, I could have hugged thee for the fidelity with which thou guardedst my trust !

June 19 and 20. In bivouac. 21. Longueville.—22. Renmous.—23. Position in front of Cambray ; retreat at dusk to a bivouac.—24. The hussar brigade resumed its position, then stretched out in an extended line of half squadrons, covered by a line of skirmishers of an equal front, and advanced towards the citadel. About 7 P.M., a smart cannonade commenced in town and citadel, and the former was taken

shortly after by escalade, with little opposition on the part of the enemy and trifling loss on our side.

It was on this day that Captain P—r, the officer adverted to in the early part of these “Jottings,” lost his first charger. His troop was on the extreme left of the extended line, and he was directed to open a communication with an infantry post stationed on our left, and at a windmill on an elevated spot. I accompanied him on this duty, and after cantering through a field of very high-standing rye, I suddenly lost sight of him, being a few yards in his rear; but on clearing the field found him standing on the brink of a well into which his charger had precipitated himself, and deposited his rider harmless on the margin. It would be difficult to give expression to the mixed feelings of horror and joy I felt on this occasion. The spot was revisited on the following morning, and a peasant was lowered down by a rope, who cut off the valise and brought up what else was

valuable or useful. The well proved to be a dry one, and about forty yards in depth; the mouth had been masked by some slight material, whether for a hellish purpose must be left to conjecture. The poor animal, a noble charger, lay at the bottom crushed and doubled up. And what an escape for the owner, whom the slightest hitch of his spur in any of the numerous trappings must have caused to be dragged into the abyss! At this distance of time I shudder at the recollection of it.

Before the day of the 24th had drawn to its close, I took a solitary ride down the main road which led under the walls of the citadel, and on high paced backwards and forwards a single centinel. Not in the slightest degree apprehending harm, I approached to within hail, and telegraphed the olive-branch, which was reciprocated. I gathered from him, that, not a regular soldier of the French army was within either the walls of town or citadel, the sole custodians being the National Guard. Our parley was soon



interrupted by the arrival of a brace of —, who, I suppose, had seen my movements, and who took up the balance of conversation, whilst I cast about for the means of replenishing an empty havresack, which flapped with provoking emptiness against my ribs.

A decent-looking *maison* was at hand, at the door of which stood the apparent owner, a jolly, good-tempered looking soul, to whom I handed my game-bag, making at the same time a civil request for *quelque chose pour manger*. Whilst Monsieur was exploring his larder, the most discordant sounds I ever heard broke above our heads, proceeding from some instrument of destruction or another, whilst piercing and cutting through the atmosphere in its onward flight towards the town.

Never before were my ears saluted with such an infernal combination of crackling, crashing, splitting sounds; but as coming from a friendly quarter, all fear of danger

was removed. My companions applied their Brummagem to the ribs of their steeds and shot off. I remained to have my request fulfilled, and was rewarded for my patience by a mighty tempting portion of a gammon of bacon; and I doubt not I might have succeeded in procuring that legitimate accompaniment, fresh eggs, could I have carried them away.

June 25. At noon a white flag floated on the citadel in token of surrender; and we were released from any thing but a hard duty, and pursued our route towards Paris. Arrived at Chatou, on the Seine, a few leagues from the metropolis, on the 7th of July, and cantoned.

During some portion of our route, we followed in the track of the Prussians, who had left unmistakeable traces and proof of their hatred against the French. The former had not exercised the manly measures enjoined by the high-minded Wellington, "that it was both ungenerous and

unsoldierlike to wreak vengeance upon the innocent peasantry and civilian."

I confess that I never heard of any particular acts of atrocity upon the person being perpetrated ; but the wanton destruction of property seemed not only beneath, but derogatory to the character of a soldier. Reprisals, when upon the soil of an enemy, by way of national satisfaction for outrages and insults endured, may, to a certain extent, be warranted ; but surely breaking up furniture,—smashing of looking-glasses, pictures, and windows,—ripping up feather beds, and scattering their contents to the winds, should be expunged from the category of allowable retaliation.

A number of the men's overalls had become rather seedy, and required both repairs and patchings ; and passing through a respectable and good-sized town, the name of which has escaped my memory, I went, accompanied by the troop *schneider*, a-shopping, in search of material. A

respectable shop, and the one most likely to supply our wants, was pointed out, and thither we proceeded, and made our business known to the shopkeeper. He led us through his spacious business-premises, and, with sundry shrugs, and a dismal expression of countenance, suiting the action to the word, pointed out rows of empty shelves, which had a few days before groaned under the weight of well-filled *fabriques* of all description. Now, you might have searched and ransacked every nook, corner, drawer, or shelf, without finding anything. *La Prusse* had boned all.

Monsieur had no sooner finished his catalogue of grievances, than his countenance brightened up, and all past wrongs appeared forgotten. *Vive la bagatelle!*—Strange and volatile beings our Gallic neighbours! Why, had such a pillaging been inflicted upon one of my John Bull countrymen, and the allotted duration of life so far extended, it would have taken

him as many years as hairs upon his head before he got rid of his ill-humour.

On the 24th of July, the British, Hanoverian, and Belgian army were reviewed in the Champs Elysées, by the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and King of Prussia. This gorgeous military display on the part of late enemies must have been most humiliating to the Parisians; and one would suppose such a galling retribution upon their heads would have cooled their inordinate thirst for war. The *cortège* was imposing beyond the powers of description or conception, comprising as it did the *élite* of the military heroes of so many nations.

Being quartered so few leagues from the French capital, I could do no less than pay it a visit, and my curiosity was amply rewarded; the only drawback was, having to go in regimentals, with sword and sabretasch dangling at my side, which deprives one of that privacy so desirable in visiting strange places.



Repairing to the Louvre, I was lucky enough to inspect it in its full and complete dress, and before the plundered spoil of pictures and sculpture had been restored to their legitimate possessors. The Laocoon, that celebrated piece of sculpture, was about to be deposited in the case prepared for its reception. Oh! but to witness the effect these retributive and just measures had upon the chafed and mortified vanity of the Parisians!—to listen to their *sacrées*,—to witness their shrugs, grins, and fierce looks, was quite amusing to those who could neither enter into nor sympathise with their feelings.

The Palais Royal engaged my next attention; and the shop windows certainly presented a tasteful arrangement of the articles for sale. But it appeared to me that in many instances, and contrary to English custom, the greater portion of the wealth was exhibited for public gaze. Looking through the windows of a shop

having a goodly display of masculine head-gear, civil and military, I was invited by Monsieur to walk in. And what will it be believed was his motive?—Why, just to hold up to ridicule the shape of a cocked hat worn by the staff-officers of the British army, which I suppose had been left with him to renovate! I can scarcely say, whether I was more vexed at his impudence than amused at his antics and powers of ridicule. The devoted hat, after being handled in every way to show contempt, and spun round by placing his fist inside, was at length laid by, and the hat and drooping feather worn on the continent proudly brought forth and exhibited; and I must admit, that the upper gear of the British officer looked mean and contemptible in comparison.

While we were expecting—and nothing loath should we have been—to remain some length of time in our pleasant quarters at Chateau, measures were taken to ensure a

plentiful supply of herbage for our cattle ; and it being the proper season, the men were employed as hay-makers. One or more monster stacks was erected in the town ; but they were destined for the benefit of our successors, an order having been issued for the movement of the British cavalry into Normandy.

Accordingly, on the 31st of July we made Pontoise ; 1st of August, Magne ; 2nd, Leon la Forêt and adjacent villages, and settled till the 3rd of October, when the regiment moved to Gisons and vicinity, much scattered, my troop alone occupying three small villages.

On the 10th of October, and at the shortest possible notice, we were routed from our cantonment to make room for the Prussians ; and the distress of mind consequent upon that movement, to an amiable and respectable household, — father, mother, and daughter, — will never be effaced from recollection. My pen can give but a feeble description of their agony

of mind and mental sufferings ; their quiet retreat being about to become the domicile of former enemies of France, had conjured up to their excited imagination impressions of the deepest horror and dread ; and their minds had become a prey (I sincerely hope without a cause) to all the bitter expectations of Prussian retaliation.

When mounted for departure, I was beset by the whole family holding on my stirrups and bridle, and imploring in tones—the most supplicatory tones, that would move a heart of stone—that I would remain and protect them. In a state of mind not to be envied I tore myself away, their agonizing shrieks of “*La Prusse ! La Prusse !*” ringing in my ears.

Yes, my countrymen, — when I have heard you complain of oppressive taxation and other national grievances, it has forcibly struck me, that in however great a degree you may have suffered in pocket, the sacrifice was cheap if it secured peace to your homes and fire-sides, and an absence

from such scenes and visitations as even this, — trifling though it be, to the general horrors felt in the seat of war.

It was near midnight before our day's march ended on the 10th of October; and we had to put up with "ground for the floor" at Rouen, on a road in a grove of trees. Report said that Monsieur le Maire refused to put the regiment in billet; be that as it may, I am well assured that the men preferred stretching their carcasses where they did, rather than wander through a strange town in search of their billets at that unseasonable hour. It was also made current, that His Worship betrayed incivilities towards the Prussians, on the score of quartering them, and was quickly brought to his senses by having his gorge encircled with a piece of hemp.

On the 11th of October, the regiment reached and cantoned at Fauville and adjoining villages, much dispersed, but in excellent quarters.

Generally on a Sunday I received an



invitation to dine with the Mayor ; and although the reception was cordial and the feeding first-rate, the tedious length to which the dining was spun out—nearly two mortal hours—operated in no inconsiderable degree as a drawback to the pleasure otherwise felt. This arose from the numerous courses introduced, and “ coursing ” each other. Now as my habits of life had inculcated *dispatch* in the gastronomic art, feasts of this nature were nearly as insupportable as fasting.

The hospitable Mayor had suffered bitterly both in purse and person under the Emperor’s conscript laws ; and the theme of his conversation partook mostly of the troubles he had undergone, which had been occasioned by that cruel, inquisitorial, and offensive measure. In the first place, he had been reduced from a comparative state of affluence to that of beggary, in finding substitutes for his sons ; and after all, the accursed and sweeping nature of the system forced them all from their home.

On the 13th of December, the regiment moved into Duppe, and the two adjacent villages of Offranville and Aiques; and on the 12th of January, 1816, we were again astride on our sheep-skins, and moved to Ville d'Eu. After travelling through Abbeville, and the miserable villages in the neighbourhood of Frenaut, Avesnes le Compte, &c.; Frenente, &c.; the environs of Hesden, Fruges, &c.; the environs of St. Omer, on the 6th of February we entered Baillene, the villages of Fleter, Meter, St. Jans Cappel, and Berthen; and here we settled down till our final removal to Calais, and thence to "England, home, and beauty!" As regards my own feelings, I felt stung with disappointment at the regiment not forming a portion of the army of occupation.

The distance from Baillene was about one mile, and it was situated upon much lower ground. In a wet season, or in a half-frozen state, the roads were impassable

for either vehicles or quadrupeds ; and for days, if not weeks, our horses were cabined in their stalls without having exercise. Travelling *à pied* to and from town was made upon stepping-stones fixed asunder at pacing distances ; and as we drew our provender and provisions from the magazine at Bailene, a sufficient number of the peasantry was supplied every three days as a means of transport. These biped animals of burthen were furnished by a requisition upon the Mayor ; and most tractable, willing, and civil beings they were, and far more obedient, I should say, than a set of my own country yokels, situated in similar circumstances, would have been. Acting as purveyor, this civil force was under my control for the time being ; and at the appointed hour a swaggering dapper little blade, dubbing himself " Garde Champêtre," and topped with a cockade that nearly extinguished him, marshalled the civil troop, and paraded them at my quarters.

The only act of delinquency that came under my observation, happened upon one occasion when two peasants had charge of the spirits, which they carried in a barrel, swung upon a pole between them. Being an hour or two beyond their time, I became rather alarmed for the safety of the contents of the keg. At length the pair hove in sight, but reeling and staggering at such a rate under their load, as to leave no doubt as to the "happy state" they were in. It is difficult to say whether I was most vexed or amused at the straining and efforts each made on approaching, in endeavouring to make the most of himself, and appear sober. On being rated soundly for their conduct and supposed breach of trust, they solemnly protested their innocence, and, in attestation thereof, called upon all the saints in their calendar—and those are not a few. My impression was, that if they had not actually tasted, they must have indulged in exceedingly strong snifts, as the deficiency was trifling.

Before moving to Calais for embarkation

to England, each of the cavalry regiments selected for home had to furnish a certain quota of horses for those regiments destined to form a part of the army of occupation. And here was I doomed to a separation that pained and grieved me sorely—bitterly. My pretty, my beautiful, my long-tried, pet mare, that had endured a two months' lameness, was pronounced incurable, and transferred with the rest. She had carried me for nearly seven years, through good report and evil report, without hurt, blemish, or, until now, an hour's unfitness for duty ; and looking at the chequered events spread over that space of time, I think I may, without the imputation of either egotism or vanity, say that we had seen a little service together. I first bestrode her in 1810 ; and in all the subsequent shifts and transfers into other troops to which I had been subjected, my little steed invariably went along with me. Oh ! how much did I envy those so fortunately placed as to be able to soften down the declining years



of a faithful animal, by allowing it to roam at large, at will, and at ease! And the reflection that she might get a less kind master than I had been, and be subjected to perhaps rough and cruel usage, embittered many an hour!

In the summer of 1816, we embarked at Calais, landed at Dover, and thence moved to Canterbury.

It is pretty notorious that the "upper crusts" of the army either participated in or connived at smuggling to no inconsiderable extent, even to the "cannons' mouth," which, loud-tongued rumour said, were charged with the most expensive and fashionable *fabriques* of France and Belgium. Well, man being an imitative animal, the "under crusts" fancied there could be no great, mortal, or heinous offence in following the example of their betters, which I believe they did to the length of their tether, and the extent of a limited exchequer. As regards myself, I plead guilty to the extent of some score of yards of black *Gros de*

*Naples* and as many of lace, as a present to a favourite old aunty, whose affections I had never forfeited, although so naughty as to "list for a soldier." These were deposited snugly between the lining of my *shabraque*.

All the dismounted men, women, children, and baggage, were shipped on board the same transport. The evening preceding our march for Canterbury, I was waited upon at my billet by three apparently to me questionable looking personages; and had they not represented themselves as revenue officers, I should certainly have put them down as common informers. Well, swelling with the importance of their errand, they stated, that there existed well-founded and good grounds for supposing that a considerable quantity of contraband goods were concealed with the baggage, and that they had represented the circumstance to the commanding officers, who referred them to me. Of course, and as in duty bound, I promised, as far as I was

concerned, their laudable endeavours for the protection of the revenue should receive no interruption; and under a promise of seeing them on the following morning, they departed.

I was at my post on the pier at cock-crow, and soon after arrived the deputation that had honoured me with a visit the preceding evening. I pointed out some monster heaps of baggage, and as the waggons were all in readiness "now was the time, now the hour." Their looks betrayed chagrin and disappointment, and sorely did they seem puzzled, and well they might be, for I would have defied old Nick himself to detect the concealment of a single contraband article. The men being all in readiness were telegraphed for action; the onslaught began, and so rapidly did boxes, portmantaus, saddles, bridles, and other munitions of war fly about, that I soon lost sight of my friends, who during the *mélée* had disappeared, and right lucky they were if they escaped with whole skins.

## CHAPTER XI.

## END OF THE JOTTINGS.

HAVING nearly run the length of my tether—having no stirring incidents or events to narrate, either by flood or field, having nothing to talk about but the marchings and counter-marchings, spread over a period of twelve mortal years of feather-bed service, the relation of which would be of little interest to a reader, and assuredly the very opposite of an agreeable task to the writer, I proceed to wind up my Jottings, selecting the ancient city of Canterbury as the spot to dismount my Pegasus, and drop the reins.

Having compassed nearly two thirds of

the allotted life of man, judging also from the aspect of affairs present and prospective, that not even a glimmering of hope or expectation could be indulged in, of bettering my condition whilst in harness, I became impatient and desirous of getting out of it, the more so from having served what is called a "full period of service," and thereby becoming entitled to as much pension, within a mere trifle, as I was ever likely to get, even by an extension of service.

Serious thoughts haunted my imagination throughout the day, and troubled dreams at night; the reflection of being doomed to serve till all my energies became wasted, my constitution shattered, if not entirely broken, sent to the right-about, as others had been, unfit for aught but to be stuck in a chimney corner and spin campaigning yarns, maddened me. All that had for so many years appeared "*couleur de rose*," became jaundiced and gangrened to



the eye, and I was, therefore, becoming morose, moody, and discontented.

I had not been either a blind or inattentive observer of the little chance the worn out and discharged non-commissioned officer has of getting hold of anything good or substantial ; those things are generally picked up by a more favoured and influential class, irrespective, too often, I have heard, of either talent or capability. Then should he, the non-commissioned officer, by any extraordinary or fortuitous event, elbow himself into respectable society, the great chances are, that he may have his feelings chafed and mortified by rubbing against one or more of a class with whom the rules of the service strictly forbade familiarity, when in a military capacity ; therefore a measure which is looked upon, and may be indispensable for the maintenance and discipline of the army, becomes a disqualifying blight and curse when carried into private life.

How often have the walls of the British

senate rung with oratorical and fervid eloquence, in forcible appeals to the feelings and sympathies for "the poor old Peninsular this," and "the poor worn out Peninsular that;" then, again, the pages of magazines, and columns of newspapers, teem with the productions from eloquent pens, in the like cause. Well, this is nothing more than right, and no one ever complains. God forbid that I should. But who ever heard of any one bold enough to attempt the enlisting of the sympathies of the country for the worn-out and discharged non-commissioned officer. He is an outcast, and his grievances, if he have any, are cared for by no one, and he is liable to be taxed with discontent and presumption, in not considering himself amply compensated by the, in some cases, miserable pittance awarded him in the shape of a pension.

I screwed up my "courage to the sticking point," and made a respectful appeal to the commanding officer. I was repulsed, if not with rudeness, the very opposite of

courtesy. I sought the interference of a higher power, and, as might be very naturally supposed, with as little success; and truly was I now adopting a course most painful to my feelings, fighting in opposition to the wishes of one whose will, in connection with my military functions, it had ever been no less a pleasure than a duty not only to obey but anticipate.

Casting about for aid in the furtherance of my resolve, I bethought myself of stirring up my country cousins, who being Salopians, one of them had ready access to a noble family, a branch of which held the reins of the British army; and through that influential chance, I was given to understand, my wishes for quitting the army were much precipitated, if not entirely accomplished.

When all that I had with so much intensity and anxiety sought after, was secured within my grasp, and the excitement consequent thereupon had somewhat cooled down, my mind at times became a prey to

other, and not over-agreeable musings. I was about to launch my frail bark upon the wide world ; to separate myself from what had for so many years been my home. When such impressions as these arose to the surface, a feeling akin to repentance would creep in; then again, such thoughts received no little aggravation by the kind and friendly rebukes from gallant officers. One would say to me, "What, Sergeant-Major, is this true, you are going to leave us?" A nod of affirmation. "Well, I am sorry for your own sake, for you are going against your interest." Another would exclaim, "Pooh, pooh! you never can be serious; besides, we cannot spare you." A third would say, "Wait a bit, something will turn up." Turn up indeed! But uncheered by a ray of hope from another quarter, I stuck to my resolve; the scintillation of the most "tiny" spark from *that* source would have ignited into a blaze that devotion to a profession which was fast flickering into extinction, if not dislike.

I may, or I may not, have considered myself entitled to some testimonial from the commanding officer, somewhat different from those common-place, and almost all-alike ones, recorded upon the face of the discharges, but I never sought it, from an opinion that I had given offence in that quarter by the unceasing pertinacity with which I followed up my endeavours to get out of harness; but, in this case, my premises were wrong, regarding that gallant officer, as appeared afterwards.

Through the active generosity and promptitude of a gentleman belonging to the regiment (one who would not merely promise, but act), interest was made for me at the War Office for an employ that was about to become vacant; and in order to do credit to the recommendation of a gallant officer, one to whom, and to the latest hour of my existence, I shall ever consider myself as owing an everlasting debt of gratitude, as also to do justice to my future employer, I put myself under a probationary course of training at an office in London.



On returning one day from my avocations to my lodgings, I was handed a letter stated to have been left by a mounted hussar. It happened to be the unsought-after, unsolicited, and unasked-after opinion of my late commanding officer, with reference to my services in the regiment,—its value not a little enhanced in my estimation, and far more to be prized than the every-day common-place testimonial furnished upon requisition. Its purport was much more flattering than I deserved or could have looked for. “Fair words butter no parsnips;” but I freely confess I felt my vanity tickled to no small degree at one passage, namely, “that every duty I had undertaken was performed in a superior manner.”

A good kind soul of an uncle—a widower, and otherwise unburthened—offered me shelter, and with him I might have remained till it had pleased God to remove him from this world, could I have reconciled myself to a country life; but I very soon became like a fish out of water, and

sighed for activity. Time passed tolerably smooth and unruffled whilst occupied in visiting and salaaming relations, friends, and schoolfellows; after that, *ennui* was beginning to creep in, accompanied by a threatened attack of the "blues."

I made solitary strolls and rambles over my native hills; retraced all and each of the various paths I had trudged in my way to and from school. The stiles I had crossed or leaped over; the gates I had passed through or swung upon—all became familiar. Then again recollections would spring up of the identical spot on which a battle had been fought. I remembered the bush I had robbed of a blackbird or thrush's nest; the tree that bore the best description of hazel-nuts; as also the one I had climbed up after a crow's nest, and got rewarded for my pains by the infliction of a hazel-twigg across my shoulders for chafing or rending my corduroy smalls.

Then there was the small river Perry,

tributary to the more noble Severn. A saunter along its banks afforded an abundance of matter for juvenile reminiscences. There was the favoured and well-remembered place for a plunge; there were the particular spots I had bottom-fished for eels, or bobbed for trout, roach, and dace, further, the deeper parts in which I had trolled for pike, which brought up in vivid remembrance the youthful excitement attending a capture of the fresh-water shark, tracing the feeling that pervades from the seizure of the bait, the bolting at pleasure to the gorging spot, and the final landing upon *terra firma*.

Thus rolled on a few more weeks, with the addition of an hour's chat now and then with the garrulous old dame domiciled in "Kynaston Cave," who dealt out, with marvellous powers of historical recollection, the wonderful doings and exploits of that notorious provincial highwayman of old, and reported architect of the cave in question.

Other and rather extraordinary relief to country monotony came to my aid, namely, "the splitting of the gnarled and unwedgeable oak!" My good relative had about his dwelling a number of roots of oak-trees, some of them of an enormous size, which had been grubbed out of Mother Earth after the tree had been felled. The expense of labour to split them would have exceeded their worth done; and I proposed the mighty feat to "rive them" asunder.

On naming it to my uncle, I really believe the good old man thought his nephew was daft. He looked mournfully at me, shook his head, and said, "Well, William, do what you please; but take care you don't hurt yourself!"

I soon provided myself with the necessary apparatus for mining and blowing up. But my first attempt was not a very happy one, for I had neglected to give the fusee a sufficient scope to enable me to get out of the way; and just as I was getting away after producing ignition, bang went the mine,

doing its duty effectually to the root, and without harm to me. In the hurry to escape I fell flat upon my face, adopting unintentionally the method resorted to when a shell is expected to explode near your carcass. The old gentleman stuck himself near a tree at a safe distance, and peeping from behind it, watched my movements ; and he assured me he felt any thing but comfortable on my account ; yet he was fain to acknowledge that if I was slightly tinged with madness, it had at least the merit of method.

I believe the explosion gave rise to strange impressions amongst the village gossips and the unsophisticated ; tongues wagged, and whisperings enunciated doubts as to the sanity of the person "just returned from the army." After the blowing up, I completed my task with the assistance of a wooden mallet and iron wedges : and thus for a few weeks was an hour or two of time killed each day.

All relish for a country life devoid of



employment being exhausted, I packed up my all, and on a fine bracing spring morning, in the year of our Lord 1829, mounted the roof of the Holyhead mail, and transported myself to the smoke of the great village.

The regiment was still at Hounslow, where I had quitted it ; I therefore took a run down, and felt more at home the few hours I remained inside the barrack walls than I had since I had left the service. I visited a pet eagle, a noble bird that I had reared since its removal from its eyrie in the mountains of Connemara,—then almost unfledged, now measuring more than seven feet from tip to top of its wing : fondled upon the grey mare I had broken in with my own hand, and almost wished myself—guess, reader, where if you please. And here end my “ Jottings.”

And now, brave and gallant regiment, adieu ! May a mirror ever be held up to your view reflecting the laurels you have won for your country in Germany, Holland,

Spain, and Belgium, and inspire you with a noble emulation to add to those distinctive and honourable trophies! That all this will be realized when your services are again required in the field I rest assured; and be it in the torrid or temperate zone, may your deeds of chivalry be chronicled by a more able, a more eloquent, but not by a more sincere and devoted writer than

A CHELSEA PENSIONER.

THE END.

LONDON:

Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.









